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"GOOD-NIGHT."

Good-night, beloved, good-night;
Sleep soundly, love, and well.
So sweet has been thy light;
So sweet shall be thy knell.
Good-night.

The night comes down o'er all;
Night is the time for sleep;
Around the shadows fall—
The shadows dark and deep.
Good-night.

Good-night; now close thine eyes,
Soft wings around thee fold;
Sleep now until the skies
Grow bright with morning's gold.
Good-night.

A FLOWER OF FATE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WILD WARRINGTONS," "LIKE LOST SHEEP," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IX. (CONTINUED.)

WITH a great and painful start I awoke. The rose-gray light of dawn was in my room; some one without my window was calling softly, "Flower—Flower!"—and the thong of a whip was smiting my window-sill.

Up I sprang, pushed back my tumbled hair, and ran—my ugly dream forgotten in a trice—to the open casement.

Yes, it was new morning—young, lovely day—and the dawn had restored my lover to me. I leaned out into the sweet chill air, stretching both hands towards him. He grasped them and kissed them in gallant greeting.

"Ah, that is right!" he said gaily. "I see you are up and dressed, and so we can start without the least delay. It is now about a quarter to four. I meant to have been even earlier, my darling, but could not altogether manage it. It has been rather a rush as it is."

But I told him that I had not been to bed—had merely lain down with my clothes on, and in that fashion had fallen asleep unexpectedly. And then shyly I began to thank him for his gift of the previous day—the photograph, the sketch, and the dear note. But he struck in somewhat impatiently—

"We'll talk about that going along, dearest. Time's short—our breakfast is waiting at Northminster. The old hag"—that was aunt Hannah—"may wake up directly, you know; and then—and then, Flower, there'll be a scene—a deuce of a row perhaps—and we don't want that. Let us look sharp and be gone!"

"I will be ready in ten minutes, Daryl," I promised quickly.

"Ten minutes!" echoed he, frowning. "Why, what have you to do?"

"I must make myself tidy and nice," I answered timidly. "I—I feel rather confused and bewildered at present, to tell the truth, but a little cold water will wake me up."

"Well that won't take long, Periwinkle. Do be quick about it, dear, for I am getting hungry—fearfully hungry."

"And I must say my prayers too, Daryl," I finished gently.

He laughed. At any other time—a time that offered opportunity for, that invited calm and dispassionate reflection—the laugh would have jarred upon me, hurt me.

But, as it was, in the novelty and excitement of that fateful hour, his light regard of what was to me so solemn and so true a thing passed almost unnoticed.

"I'll give you ten minutes for everything," he said blithely. "And, Flower," he added, in a graver tone, "recollect what I have told you. Bring nothing away with you from this house, mind you, beyond the few things which are absolutely indispensable. All deficiencies shall be made good by-and-by."

I assured him earnestly that no wish he had expressed in the matter had been forgotten by me. His wishes were commands, I told him, and should be obeyed to the letter.

"The chaise," said my lover, "is on the moor—just round the corner of that shed yonder. I'll go and see whether the horse is all right—what a pickle we should be in if he were to bolt!—and will return here when the time is up."

Daryl strolled off on his errand, and I withdrew from the window.

When the ten minutes were flown I was ready. I had put on the best summer clothes I possessed, my sole luggage being an antiquated sunshade—a faded mauve silk one, with a handle that doubled up and a deep fringe—and a small hand-bag.

I had taken a last tender lingering look at my little bookcase, the wise silent occupants of which, I understood in after-years, had been my truest friends and companions at Moor Edge.

I had knelt by the side of my small white rumpled bed, and in brief hurried prayed had passionately asked Heaven's blessing upon the step I was about to take—the new life I was about to enter upon, my new strange unknown life as Daryl Darkwood's wife.

And then—and then, looking slowly round the narrow familiar room, every homely bit of furniture in which I can see before me now as distinctly as if long and bitter years of suffering could not by me be counted between "the dim yesterday and the bright to-day," I realised that there was indeed nothing more to be done.

I am ready.

Again I went to the window. With outstretched arms Daryl was waiting there.

"Come!" said he.

"By this way—like this?" I faltered.

"Yes. It is the simplest and the safest," he replied. "Hand me down the bag and the parasol; then take my hands firmly and jump. I will catch you, never fear!"

"One moment, Daryl," I pleaded, holding back. "Do not—do not be angry; but—but I should like, if I may, to leave behind me some message, a written message—just a word or two—for uncle Si—for—for—— Oh, you know what I mean!" I broke off tremulously.

Daryl Darkwood struck the ground with his foot.

"What folly!" he exclaimed. "Why, Flower——"

"Please, oh, please let me!" I whispered. "It won't take long."

Making no further objection on the point, he tore a leaf hastily from a sketch-book he carried in his pocket, and scribbled upon it—

"Simon Creedy—I know everything; and to-day I have left Moor Edge for ever. I have found one who truly loves me, and whom I dearly love. His home, not yours, henceforth will be mine.

"FLOWER DARKWOOD."

"There," said my lover coolly—"stick that, dear, upon your pin-cushion. It will make the old man sit up."

"It looks too—too cold and unfeeling—so cruelly brusque?" said I very wistfully, reading with fast-dimming eyes what Daryl Darkwood had written. "And—and, besides, I do not know everything. It is not the truth——"

"Oh, hang it—oh, that's nonsense, dear, I mean! Surely you know enough, at any rate, for the present!"

"And—and there's the signature. Oh, Daryl!"

"It's all right, my dear little girl. By the time the old ruffian comes home and reads that, why, you will of course be 'Flower Darkwood'—in fact, a quite old married woman!"

Ah, well, I had been called upon to choose between the two men, and I had elected to trust to Daryl Darkwood! Him I had chosen before all other men; thenceforward I must do his bidding—obey him—he was my master. His wishes, his will, now and for ever after, must be mine.

With my head turned aside, so that my sad eyes should not witness the deed my trembling hands must so unwillingly perform, I pinned upon the cushion on my dressing-table those cold lines of eternal farewell. Oh, uncle Simon—oh, uncle Simon—good-bye—good-bye!

A few seconds later, with a poor forced smile, I assured my lover that I was ready—yes, really ready at last. I climbed on to the window-ledge, put my hands into his, and then, gazing trustfully down into his dark tender eyes, I sprang fearlessly earthward, to be caught safely within his strong and sheltering arms.

The chaise that was waiting for us upon the breezy moor was a somewhat dilapidated-looking vehicle, I thought. It was the best he could get in the neighborhood, Daryl said gaily; and the animal attached to it—with no thoughts, I am sure, of bolting—was tranquilly cropping the sweet and dewy herbage.

The sun was waxing stronger; the larks were singing out of sight; upon the far uplands the heather took faint crimson and purple hues when viewed through the vanishing morning mists.

I was seated by Daryl Darkwood's side. I was now very silent. I dared not look back at the house I had forsaken. He gathered up the reins, gave the horse a sharp cut with the whip, and we were off.

"Ah," cried Daryl, suddenly stooping and taking from beneath the seat of the musty old chaise a handful of lovely real orange-flowers, "I ought to have remembered these before! See, sweetheart—fasten them at your throat! I wonder whether they are as becoming as periwinkles?"

For a moment, in a dazed unseeing way, I stared at the exquisite blossoms. For a moment I failed utterly to realise their tender and deep significance, because I believe that their rare fragrance had turned me somewhat giddy and faint.

Daryl put the flowers in my lap, and passed his arm round my waist. Fondly he drew me to his side, and bent his dark head to mine. I clung to him helplessly—he was my all now!

"What—is it possible that you have forgotten, my dearest," whispered he, "that this is our wedding-day?"

CHAPTER X.

Life is real—life is bitter; but life after all is—or it should be—only a pilgrimage to higher things. So the sooner it is over the better.

Some such sad reflection as this was passing, dimly and unuttered, through my tired brain, as I sat by the open window of an up-stairs sitting-room in a not-too-cheerful lodging-house which stood in the neighborhood of Shepherd's Bush, with Hammersmith not far off.

It was evening. Twilight was deepening into darkness. The sultry night promised to be even sultrier than the midsummer day had been.

In this stuffy and third-rate suburban locality, where cheap villas and gaudy shops abounded, and where the near rumble of train-car and omnibus seemed to make the windless air grow yet more unendurably close, the mere thought of the real sweet fresh green country at eventide came to one's longing soul like a dream of Paradise.

The furniture of that up-stairs "drawing-room" was both shabby and of a by-gone date; but the limp muslin curtains about the window were tolerably clean—and that was something to be grateful for.

Flies however had made the chandelier a favorite abiding-place; green and yellow tissue-paper, fantastically cut diamond-wise, draped the gilt frame of the mirror upon the mantelpiece.

I was not alone in the room. Dozing upon the hard sofa—which, notwithstanding its inflexibility, was rich in gay antimacassars of all kinds—lay my little daughter, aged four years and some months—a delicate patient little soul, and "the image of her mother," strangers were wont to say. Nevertheless I could not discern the likeness.

To my eyes the little one was like her father; and sometimes, when my sad heart was unusually low and sore, I grieved bitterly that this should be so.

The sitting-room door opened softly; and with a start I looked round. The landlady of the house had entered the room; but she halted in the dusk near the doorway.

"What—sitting all alone in the gloamin', Mrs. Darkwood?" said the landlady. "Dear, dear, 'm, that is lonesome-like, isn't it? Let me light the gas."

"Hush—no!" I answered, in a rapid undertone. "I prefer the twilight, thank you. Do not make a noise, Mrs. Ramage. Isla, I fancy, is asleep."

"Pretty duck!" breathed Mrs. Ramage, clasping her hands and looking affectionately towards the sofa. "Is she better to-night, mem, do you think?"

"I—I do not know. I hope so," replied I.

"You ought to have a doctor to her—you really ought, Mrs. Darkwood," whispered the landlady sympathetically—"the pretty angel! I don't like to say it, but—but—she really seems fading away. Rory says the same—and a doctor, you know, mem, if you had him in time, would safe to be able to set matters straight a bit. It seems such a pity, when there's Doctor Morrison only just round the corner in the Tregonda Road; and—and," ventured Mrs. Ramage as delicately as her kind heart could prompt her, and waxing bold perhaps in the friendly gloom, "he isn't a dear doctor, not by any means, Mrs. Darkwood. I do assure you he isn't—only three-and sixpence a visit, which of course, though, don't include the medicine; that you get afterwards at the chemist's. He did Miss de Vere—my Rory, you know—a lot of good when she was laid up some time back with a nasty sore-throat. Indeed I do verily believe that if it hadn't ha' been for Doctor Morrison she would have lost her engagement at the theatre. And, as I said before, Mrs. Darkwood, his fee is only three-and-sixpence; and not so much as that if you go to his house——"

My hands were twisted fiercely together in my lap; the nails of one pierced the flesh of the other. I interrupted the landlady, speaking with difficulty.

"You are extremely kind and thoughtful, Mrs. Ramage. I—I will tell Mr. Darkwood what you say."

"Really I think it would be as well, mem," said Mrs. Ramage earnestly. "And shall I lay the supper-cloth, Mrs. Darkwood, now? Will the Captain be in to supper?"

"You forget," I said, with impatience, "what I told you the other day. My husband is not 'Captain.' He has nothing to do with the Army. He is simply 'Mr. Darkwood;' and I shall be glad if you

will call him so. It grates on my ear, Mrs. Ramage, to hear you say 'Captain,' when the title is so utterly wrong."

"Well, I'm sure I beg your pardon, mem," simpered the landlady good-temperedly; "but it will slip out sometimes, and I can't help it. You see, it's all Rory's fault. She says that Mr. Darkwood is the handsomest and the distangiest-looking gentlemen as she ever set eyes on, either in the Park or at the Levity, or anywhere else for the matter o' that; that he has got the true mili-tary cut, and that if he ain't a Captain, why, he ought to be one, Rory says; and so you must forgive——"

"Is Miss de Vere gone yet?" I inquired gently, desirous to turn the drift of the talk.

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Darkwood. What—didn't you see her run out to ketch the omlibus?" cried the mother of Miss de Vere proudly, her voice going upward. "Why, it's close on nine o'clock, and her turn comes on at ——"

"Oh, hush, please," I entreated, with a swift glance towards the sofa. "If she is asleep, I would not for anything have her disturbed."

"Pretty darling," breathed Mrs. Ramage obediently, also again glancing at the sofa; "pretty innocent dear! As I was saying," she continued, in the smallest of whispers, "it is close upon nine o'clock; and Rory, during this week, is due at the theatre at 8.15. She has a new song for this evening called 'Would You Believe It?' And Rory says that the whole orchestry, and indeed everybody at the theatre, vows that the chorus is the most fetching one that the Levity has heard for a long time past. I told her if the omlibus was late or crowded or anything she'd better take an 'ansom, for she had got on her silver-gray satin and her lovely new purple-velvet 'princess;' and I wouldn't have her spile 'em in a crowded old omlibus for the world. The proprietor and manager, Mr. Binkworthy, has a supper on to-night, and, of course, Rory was invited. He said the party would not be complete without Miss Aurora de Vere, and, if 'Would You Believe It?' proves the success that Mr. Binkworthy and all of 'em think it will, why, next week Rory will have her name upon the bills in large red letters a foot long, instead of small blue or black ones as she has had it up till now. And her salary will be raised, Mr. Binkworthy says, something considerable—and that will be better than all."

"Well, you need not trouble to spread the cloth unless Mr. Darkwood should come in and want anything," I said wearily. "And if he should I will ring, Mrs. Ramage. I want nothing myself, thank you."

"Not even the gas?" said Mrs. Ramage, reluctant to go.

"Not yet. It is cooler in the dark," I answered quietly.

"And the Captain? Oh, excuse me 'm—I forgot again. Mr. Darkwood then, you think, won't be in just yet?"

"I cannot tell. As I said, Mrs. Ramage, if he comes in and wants anything I will ring."

The landlady, feeling herself dismissed, backed towards the door; and, having sidled out and gained the landing, she closed the door as cautiously as she had opened it a few minutes before.

Alone, I rose ghost-like from my chair and crept over to the shadowy antimacassar-strewed sofa to reassure myself that the little one had not been roused.

No; the child had fallen into a sound sleep, was breathing regularly, the small pale face pillowed upon a tiny arm. Fearful even of kissing my darling, I bent over the sofa-head and murmured passionately—

"Heaven help and have pity on us both, my treasure, my own. What shall we do? What shall we do?"

Then in a kind of dumb despair pressing my forehead downward into my hot palms, I moved slowly back to my seat by the window—there to think—once more to try to think dispassionately what could be done for the best.

Alas, in dire straits, "the best" is always so hard to discover! It was a problem worse than a nightmare, and with every day that came and went it seemed to grow more terrific.

To-night I felt too weak to wrestle with the spectre—the future was my spectre. Try how I would, in my present state of mind could bring no concentrated thought to bear upon the torturing question.

Weeks of weary brooding upon the inevitable, sleepless nights passed in contemplation of the chaos ahead, had, I believed, rendered my brain apathetic, when, for my own good and for the good of others, it should have been keen and alert.

And so my thoughts—as they often did when I, in an utter heart-sickness which was nothing approaching resignation, sat down to tussle with my destiny—wandered without my will, back to the days that were forever dead.

I was not the first woman, I knew, nor should I be the last, who had made a grievous blunder upon the threshold of her womanhood.

The wild freshness of life's morning is the time of sowing, and woe for the guerdon of the sower if that sewing-time be lightly regarded! The harvest thereof will be a barren one, and in truth means blackest failure.

As I sat there so stilly and with bowed head, my little sick child sleeping on the couch a few yards away, my girlhood came back to me. I was a girl again, a girl innocent, careless and free, never dreaming that the day would dawn which would see me Daryl Darkwood's wife.

How well did I remember my moorland life! And how far back in the unalterable past it all now seemed—its health, its mystery, its simple joys; the glory of its lonely summer, the isolation of its still lonelier winter; my books, my day-dreams and my faithful mongrel friend; and those two—the man and the woman—upon whom for so long and so trustfully I had looked as my sole kith and kin!

And then—and then across my calm life-path had stepped Daryl Darkwood, bringing with him love, agony, mistrust, terror, and a speedy severing of all that had hitherto bound me to an existence which before his coming had been enough. Yes, until he came, I know now in my ignorance—which verily was bliss—I had been satisfied.

But with him and his headlong passion all was changed, and the wild freshness of morning had fled forever. With knowledge, as in the first Eden days, had come pain; and eyes that had been a stranger to the anguish of weeping had grown familiar with the bitterness of real tears. Life is indeed very real, very earnest—at least it is so to ninety-nine mortals out of every hundred.

How vividly did I remember my flight from Moor Edge; our hasty marriage before a registrar at Northminster; our wondrous honeymoon abroad, the brief delirium of which joy-dream I cared not now to recall, for the present was made up of earnest actualities, and such contrasts are not kind.

The first year of my married life had not been wholly unhappy; and at the close of it my child was born. Our little daughter Isla, as I have already said, was at this date something more than four years old; and night and morning did I thank heaven that neither brother nor sister had followed her. Far better so!

No; that first year of wedded life, which had been spent in Paris, where Daryl Darkwood had appeared to possess many friends, both men and women, had not been wholly unhappy; though it had not taken me a whole year to find out that in the man I had married there were two Daryl Darkwoods—the one who, in a brief and secret wooing, had won me at Moor Edge; the other the husband, and no longer a lover, who had already grown tired of me, and who made no feint of showing that this was not the truth.

In those early days of our life together I had, too, made other strange discoveries, which had at first filled me with acute dismay. But in time, alas, one gets used to anything, even to a bad husband.

The man I had married was cursed with the vice which is the parent vice of all the rest. He was lazy. Being lazy, he was fond of pleasure and constantly seeking it, oftentimes drank more than was good for him, and in his cups would swear at me, his terrified wife, in a language that before my marriage had never assailed me.

"I thought you were an artist—a painter, Daryl?" I said wonderingly to him one day, perhaps some six months after that hurried ceremony at Northminster.

"So I am," said he.

"Why, then, do you never paint?"

"Oh, you don't understand! I am an amateur; and amateurs, Periwinkle, my dear, paint just when they please—that is, whenever inspiration is the motive power," was his careless reply, delivered with a yawn.

I ventured to ask him no more then, but pondered, not without misgiving, the ways of amateur painters. They seemed, if Daryl himself was a true specimen of the brotherhood, to have plenty of money at their command.

Where did it come from? I wondered every day, but feared to put the question into plain words; and Daryl was not the man to notice timid hints. He could be very deaf and also very blind when he chose.

I knew even now no more of him than I had known on my wedding-day. His people were all dead, he said carelessly, or he was dead to them—which amounted to the same thing.

If anything, he was, as he had given out, a painter by profession, but believed indeed he was getting sick of that; though doubtless he should take to painting again when once we got back to England.

We had no fixed home, we Darkwoods—we were wanderers on the face of the earth. A few months spent in one Continental town, a few months passed in another—so the years went by, Daryl making friends of a certain sort whithersoever we moved, I seeking none. From a shy, slender, quite unformed girl I had become a quiet, reserved, not to say a proud woman, looking, by reason of the manner in which I carried myself, considerably taller—so I was told—than I really was. I had my child for companionship, for society, and that was all; for the men and women whose company was sought by Daryl, and who seemed to find pleasure in his, were emphatically not a class of beings with whom I could in any wise feel either at ease or at home. Instinctively I shunned and disliked them; yet I could give no reason for my dislike. Isla, my little daughter, was all the world to me now.

It would not infrequently happen that Daryl would fly into a passion with me for declining to make a friend of "Countess This" or "Mrs. That," and the husbands of them, who were, if possible, more objectionable that the woman themselves, and would tell me, Flower Darkwood, that I was shy, unformed, foolish, and that my curious bringing-up had made of me something worse than a nun.

Naturally taunts, disputes of this nature between us led to much misery in the way of downright quarrelling. One night in Dresden, Daryl had been drinking with some American acquaintance of his in the town who, he said, were "painters." He came in and reproached me for moping, for unsociability—he was evidently in a bickering humor—and for the fiftieth time told me that I was shy and stupid—enough, in fact, to drive a man to the dogs.

There are limits to human forbearance: and unmerited reproach—to say nothing of undeserved neglect—is at all times hard to endure patiently.

"If I was shy and stupid, Daryl," I said bitterly, but as calmly as I was able, "why—why did you marry me?"

"Ah, Why?" answered he, with a disagreeable sigh.

"And, having married me," I continued, with rising warmth, "Why don't you redeem your promise, Daryl? When you made me you wife, you said——"

"If I had not been so confoundedly in love with you, I never should have made you my wife," grumbled he. "There was the mischief of it!"

"You said—you promised me faithfully—you cannot deny it—that you would do your utmost to discover the true history of my parentage in the days—in the days before I was—before I was taken to——"

"Confusion seize that stale old grievance!" he said violently. "Am I never to hear the last of it? If you were wise, Flower, you would be content to let it rest—it is an ugly past—would be satisfied with what you are and what you have in the present. Take my word for it, there's no good to be——"

"Daryl, once for all, I do not mean to let it rest. I am not satisfied. For my own sake, for Isla's sake, I want to know—nay, I will sooner or later know the truth! You shall have no peace until I know it."

He faced me savagely.

"You make me speak out," he cried, "when Heaven knows I don't want to—to hurt your feelings!"

I was standing at the time; but, turning suddenly faint, I sat down.

"My feelings, Daryl!" I echoed unwisely. "So it has only just occurred to you that I am not unlike other women, after all!"

"Oh, hang you, Flower! You make a fellow's life a burthen to him with your everlasting whining and discontent. I say again, let the dead past alone—let sleeping dogs lie. Depend upon it, if I had honestly thought that there was anything respectable to find out concerning your antecedents, I should have cleared up the business long ago. But—take my word for it, I say—there isn't. I understand it all—it's all plain enough—now. I married 'Flower Creedy' before the registrar at Northminster; and I did but marry my wife in her real and lawful name, or what"—with a shrug "was as good as such—that served as well. Voila tout!"

"Then you believe now," I said huskily, "that—that my uncle—I—I mean, that the generous-hearted old man man at Moor Edge was—was, in fact——"

"Exactly," put in Daryl, with a hiccough. "I believe that, when years ago the old scamp brought you home to Moor Edge, he had simply, from some secret quarter or another, claimed his own—had seen fit to adopt—well, if you will have it—his own child."

"But the Stonyhampton people used to say that I had been stolen, Daryl, or—or something of the kind," cried I piteously. "Often I have heard you say so yourself. Oh, you must remember!"

"The Stonyhampton people be—— Pshaw," broke off Daryl Darkwood roughly—"how should the fools know? Flower, I want some brandy-and-seltzer. Get it, please; look alive; and do, for Heaven's sake, cease this infernal chatter about what can't be helped or mended."

I took no notice of his request; but, white to the lips, I rose to my feet and staggered over to the arm-chair in which he lay sprawling, his hands thrust down into his pockets, his long legs stretched wide apart.

"I'll get you nothing—I'll never obey you in any one trivial thing again, until—until I have heard the truth. You shall speak out to-night, if—if in so doing you should break my heart—should kill me outright!" said I passionately. "If I am the child of Simon Creedy, why then was his house unfit to be my home? What were the horror and the mystery of Moor Edge, and why did you terrify me into quitting its roof? Why——"

"I wanted you," he interrupted me sullenly, in his turn. "I was idiotically in love with you. A man will do anything, dare anything, say or swear anything, to get for his own the woman he loves. You ought to know that by this time."

"What a man, and what a noble love!" I said, with bitter scorn.

He laughed unpleasantly, with lowered eyelids.

"Daryl!" cried I, "I will know! Do you hear? You shall tell me! Who—what was—what is Simon Creedy? Tell me Daryl!"

With an oath Daryl Darkwood sprang unsteadily from his chair; and, gripping me by the shoulders, he forced me downwards upon my knees.

"Tell you? I will!" he shouted, still gripping me, and swaying above me, as I glanced up at him with quailing affrighted eyes. He is——"

He bent low over me, dropped his voice, and hissed the hideous words into my ear. Yet I heard them—heard them each one distinctly.

Shudderingly I looked back into my strange past, and saw it all once more as if by lurid lightning gleams; and I believed that Daryl Darkwood had then spoken only the truth—that I had heard the grim truth at last. No, I never doubted then for an instant that I was Simon Creedy's child.

I was not very vigorous in those days; on that night I was really faint and ill. With merely a gasp for breath, a short heart-broken sob, I sank unconscious at Daryl's feet.

For days afterwards I kept to my bed, stricken down with a kind of melancholy and low fever; but time, one knows, is a marvellous physician, and by-and-by I rallied and grew strong again. Nevertheless, had it not been for my child—the little dark-haired Isla—I should, I thought, have prayed that I might die and be at rest forever.

After that ever-to-be-remembered night in Dresden, the past—the fateful past in which we two had met—was never again mentioned between Daryl Darkwood and me. For myself, I could only ponder it with horror unspeakable—though oftentimes the old life would come back to me in my dreams.

And my mother—what of her? I wondered sometimes. Was she living or dead; and, if living, where? Did Simon Creedy himself know? Perhaps yes—perhaps no. And so—and so it was because of my birth—the shame of it—that he had in my earliest years taught me to call him "uncle." The stain on my life, he fancied, could be hidden thus—hidden, but never rubbed out.

No wonder he had been so good, so generous, always so kind and tender to me. No wonder I had cared for him in return. Oh, uncle Simon, it was then but natural, say what one might. And yet the keen pain, the amazing gloom and horror of it all!

Heigh-ho! How bitter and crooked was life—how full of disappointment, of disenchantment, and of rough awakenings from impossible dreams.

When Isla's fourth birthday had gone by, it became plain to me, horribly plain, that money was growing scarce in our little family.

Daryl's means, whatever their source, were on the brink of exhaustion; his luck at the gaming tables—and for some time past he had played a good deal—seemed utterly to have deserted him.

His sketches, his paintings, appeared to be of no value abroad; no one, in fact, seemed to care about or to understand the very English-looking pictures that Daryl drew and painted.

With every day he grew more morose and black-browed; and when things went wry, and loomed in the near future more hopeless than ever, he drank brandy, and swore terribly, frightening little Isla out of her wits.

Left, as I had been, so much to myself, I had turned my leisure and my loneliness to solid account. Naturally fond of books, and keenly alive to the pleasure derived from their silent companionship, I had by diligent study during the past few years acquired—for an English woman—a thorough mastery over the French and German tongues.

For study, for hard mental work of any kind, I found that I had a genuine aptitude. The acquiring of languages came easy to me; music too had not been neglected.

In our more prosperous days, whilst staying in Munich, Daryl had consented to my studying under the first rate guidance of the famous Herr Bode; and afterwards with other clever tutors elsewhere, I had accomplished wonders. My progress indeed had astonished myself.

It had proved that I was gifted with a strong and beautiful voice, deficient in no quality—powerful in its passion, sweet in its pathos; and patient hard work and right cultivation had brought their usual reward.

Yes; in the old dead and gone days I had been a shy, light-hearted, ignorant girl; but with hard schooling, in a hard world, I had become a woman of many accomplishments—reserved unquestionably, yet capable of intense feeling—suffering much perhaps were others would not suffer at all.

When we discovered that financial matters were desperate—realized that something must beyond all doubt be done to remedy them—we were in Brussels, having lately arrived from Homburg.

"Properly managed, the journey would not cost us much, Daryl," I suggested. "Let us go to England."

"What pray to do there?" he muttered with a frown.

"I am certain that I could teach French and music," I said, "and other things besides. And you—you could of course sell your pictures in London, Daryl."

Again he said something in a growling tone—something to the effect that he was not, if he knew it, going to have his wife slaving about the London streets as a drudge of a daily governess.

A queer smile, I believe, passed over my lips, although it was nothing new to me to hear Daryl Darkwood take this lofty tone when all the while I knew that he cared not a straw in so far as his wife's dignity or inclination might be at all involved.

After much grumbling and gloom on Daryl's part, my suggestion was ultimately acted upon. We came to London towards the end of May, and found a cheap lodging in the Lambeth district.

But it soon became too evident to my eyes that the child, delicate from her birth, was sickening and growing frailer in that low-lying locality near the river; and I therefore urged Daryl to quit Lambeth and to move westward, where the air would be lighter and purer.

After some difficulty, another lodging was found in the vicinity of Shepherd's Bush—Chesterfield Avenue, the place was called—in the house of Mrs. Ramage and her daughter Aurora; and then Daryl refused emphatically to move an inch farther out of town.

From the Tregonda Road, said he, we could, by the aid of tram-car and omnibus, in a very short time get to Kew or to Ealing Common; and surely those places were airy enough for anybody.

Could I have had my will, we should have removed outright to some outlying breezy suburb—this alone for the child's sake; for it seemed to me that Shepherd's Bush was in reality but a poor improvement upon the Lambeth neighborhood. Certainly Isla at present looked little better for the change.

We had now been three weeks in Mrs. Ramage's house; two weeks' rent had been paid somehow or other, one was owing. What valuables in the way of trinkets I had possessed had been quietly parted with before we left the Lambeth lodging. Few as they were, Daryl, I well knew, had missed them—they were his own gifts to me—I had no others; but he said nothing—nor would he, I well knew too, say anything with regard to the disappearance of my jewels. I sold my gold chain one day for three pounds; on the following day Daryl had come to me and had "borrowed" thirty shillings.

At the present time I had not a penny in the world to call my own—it was the truth—and the little sick Isla was in need of many a luxury that it was utterly out of my power to obtain for her.

So far I had made no attempt whatever to find pupils or employment of any sort, for I could not endure the thought of the child's being left to the casual care and mercy of strangers; though no two female hearts could be more thoroughly kind than were the hearts of Mrs. Ramage and her daughter Aurora.

The latter was a rising "comedy artiste" at a certain theatre of varieties situated somewhere between Holborn and Soho, called the "Levity," where she figured in the bills and programmes as Miss Aurora de Vere, the mother of Miss de Vere having all her life, though in a humbler capacity, been associated with theatres and "caves of harmony" both in town and in the provinces.

Mrs. Ramage's husband, when alive, had been in turn a carpenter, stage-carpenter, a "super" in a crowd, a limelight man, a waiter in theatre refreshment-rooms, and had also in his time filled other useful posts in the same busy and interesting sphere of action; whilst Mrs. Ramage herself had been a "scrubber-out" of green-rooms and dressing-rooms, a dresser to third-rate actresses and singers, also, like her husband, a "super" in a crowd; and once, years back, she had "gone on" with Aurora when a real live baby in long clothes was wanted in a harrowing scene at an East-End theatre where realism perhaps ranked before art.

But, when her husband died, and she was no longer young herself, Mrs. Ramage took to letting lodgings at Shepherd's Bush. She was an active, a good-hearted, and an honest soul, and she refused flatly to live in idleness upon her daughter's comfortable earnings. If she could get members of "the profession" to take her drawing-room floor, why, so much the better was Mrs. Ramage pleased, they were as a whiff of the old life she had known and loved in her youth. If however lodgers of this character were not forthcoming, she made the best of those she could get in their stead.

Mrs. Ramage was proud of her lodgers, and never robbed them. Nevertheless, soft-hearted as landladies of suburban lodging-houses many occasionally prove, that they do not like to be kept waiting unduly for money honestly their own. How, I wondered, as I sat there in the summer night gloom by the open up-stairs window—my head stilled bowed on my locked hands, my heart sick with despair—how was Mrs. Ramage to be paid that week—not only that week, but the next, and the week following? How was Doctor Morrison, who lived "only just round the corner" in the Tregonda Road, to be called in to prescribe for Isla, when doctors want their fees, no matter how reasonable those fees may be? Doctors, moreover, are chary of trusting strangers; they like other folk in this world, must look after their own.

What was to be done? What must be done for the best?

I know that Daryl had a little money with him; for a few days back he had succeeded in selling two or three water-color drawings to a dealer and frame-maker in the Strand. But I did not know—he had not told me—how much he had got for his pictures. What money he could obtain in this manner he always wanted for himself. I hated—it was agony to me—to be obliged to ask him for a single shilling.

Ah, if he would only work or try to work harder! The talent was his undoubtedly—the pluck, the application, the will, were wanting. What, I wondered drearily, did he do with his time, his money, when he had any to spend? He was out nearly the whole of the day. Whither did he go? I, his wife, knew no more than Mrs. Ramage down-stairs.

My painful reverie was so deep, so self-absorbing, that I failed to hear a latch-key grate in the lock of the front-door, a quick step upon the stairs, the sitting-room door again open, but not this time to admit Mrs. Ramage.

The lamps—what few of them there were—in Chesterfield Avenue were lighted; the one opposite to No. 11 threw its wan light upward upon my bowed head. A hand dropped heavily upon my back. With a great start and wild dazed eyes I looked up.

"Why the deuce are you sitting in the dark, Periwinkle" cried my husband boisterously. He always called me "Periwinkle" when he was in high good humor, and occasionally when he was not. "Are you asleep?"

In an instant I was wide awake.

"No—dreaming though, perhaps," I answered, myself unconscious of the bitter weariness in my voice.

"Well, look here—— Why on earth didn't that old fool below light the gas? It's a lot past ten," he broke off, noisily proceeding to draw down the chandelier and to search for a box of matches that he carried in his waistcoat-pocket.

"I asked her not to. And, Daryl, please make less noise if you can. Isla has fallen asleep upon the sofa; she is very poorly to-night."

He struck a match, and set the gas flaring extravagantly. I perceived then that he had been drinking, though in a manner he was now sober.

"Poor, Flower—you are full of fancies about that child! She's naturally a bit delicate—always was. With all your coddling, you only make her worse—'m sure of it; and—and—— Why, she ought to have been in bed hours ago."

"Do you want any supper, Daryl?" I asked quietly.

I was aware our larder just then was furnished scantily enough.

"Presently. Look here, Flower—I was in luck's way to-day. In Piccadilly I ran against an old school-fellow—a sort of cousin or connection of mine, I suppose he is—and he lent me ten pounds."

"Lent you, Daryl?"

"Yes," he said roughly; "why not?"

"Daryl, give me a sovereign of it?" I said.

"What for, my dear?" he hiccoughed.

"I want to see Doctor Morrison about Isla. His fee, Mrs. Ramage says, is only three and sixpence. But—but of course, Daryl, there will be the medicine to pay for as well."

"Oh, hang it, Flower, if you are going to begin physicking the youngster with doctor's stuff, you'll about do for her altogether—see it you don't!" he remarked carelessly, going somewhat unsteadily over to the bell-cord and pulling it sharply. "By-the-by, I asked Leigh Eversleigh to call, if he didn't mind coming out to such an infernal hole as this. And he said he would."

"Is Leigh Eversleigh the old friend whom you met to-day, Daryl?" I inquired, resolving then and there that, should this Leigh Eversleigh ever really find his way out to Chesterfield Avenue, I would thank him, let it cost me what it might, for his generous and timely "loan."

"Yes, he is. And if—and if," said Daryl, "you do positively want the money, why, here's a couple of sovereigns for you, Periwinkle. The old woman down-stairs must be paid, I suppose."

I caught up the two gold pieces eagerly, murmuring my feverish thanks, just as the child upon the sofa stirred uneasily, moaned a little, and then said plaintively—

"Mamma, mamma, are you here?"

"I am here, Isla. And are you better, my darling?"

"I am very tired, mamma, and so thirsty."

"Are you, Isla? And what would you like?"

"Some lemonade, mamma."

"You shall have it directly, darling."

"Tired—lemonade!" cried Daryl, laughing loudly. "Bless my heart alive, what next?"

"Papa, is it you? Have you come home then?

"So it seems, doesn't it, Toddlekins?" said her father boisterously. "Come in!" shouted he in answer to a tap at the sitting-room door; and Mrs. Ramage, having heard the bell, accordingly entered, bearing a supper-tray with everything at once collected upon it that there was to bring up-stairs to her lodgers.

"Ah, sir, how are you this evening?" said Mrs. Ramage simperingly, as she set down her load.

But I kneeling there scarcely heard them. I was anxious, broken-hearted, full of muttered fears. Ah, could it actually be that I was the Flower Creedy of the old Moor Edge days? Had I ever in reality known a careless and happy girlhood in the past? It might be so. Yet to me, Flower Darkwood, now tried in the furnace of sorrow and experience, the transformation seemed impossible.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Bric-a-Brac.

THE POTATO.—The French have been doing honor to the potato by celebrating the centenary of Parmentier, who not only introduced that root into France, but inveigled his countrymen into eating it. Parmentier's efforts to popularise the plant were all in vain until he bethought him of the old proverb concerning stolen fruit, and planted a large field with potato. When they were fit for digging he caused them to be protected all day long by gendarmes. When the officers were withdrawn his potato-field was plundered. The taste thus acquired spread with amazing rapidity; Parmentier had a title bestowed on him by Louis XVI., and took for his crest a potato flower.

THE ELEPHANT'S PIETY.—Ancient writers (as Pliny and Ælian) have recorded that elephants go forth from the haunts in which they seclude themselves in order to worship the new moon, and they add that in lifting their trunks in the air the elephants present the green branches of trees to that changeful planet-deity, and endeavour by such an offering to testify towards her their respect and submission. Some ancient authorities also agree that elephants, sharing in this particular the ritual of the Persians and the Peruvians, observe the custom every morning of saluting the sun by elevating their trunks, as if these were praying hands, with the view of commencing the day with an act of religious homage.

A CLEAR QUESTION.—A certain learned judge, when attempting to be clear, is at times rather perplexing. "My good woman," he is reported to have said to a witness, "you must give an answer, in the fewest possible words of which you are capable, to the plain and simple question, whether, when you were crossing the street with the baby on your arm, and the omnibus was coming down on the right and the cab on the left side, and the brougham was trying to pass the omnibus, you saw the plaintiff between the brougham and the cab, or between the omnibus and the cab, or whether and when you saw him at all, and whether or not near the brougham, cab, and omnibus, or either, or any two, and which of them respectively—or how was it?"

TATTOO CUSTOMS.—A current article on the subject says that in former times in the vicinity of Los Angeles, California, every chief caused the tattooed marks upon his face to be reproduced upon trees or poles which indicated the boundaries of his land; and, as these marks were well known to neighboring chiefs, they were a sufficient warning that trespassers would be punished. A custom akin to this prevails in Australia, where the tattooed designs upon the face of a native are often engraved upon the bark of trees near his grave. Among many of the tribes west of the Mississippi there are still numbers of persons who bear tattoo marks upon the chin, the cheeks, and even upon other parts of the body, but the marks seldom occur in any forms other than narrow lines, except among the Haida Indians of Queen Charlotte's Island, where the art of tattooing has reached a higher degree of development than on the mainland. The Haidas tattoo upon the back, breast, forearms, thighs, and the legs below the knees; and women submit to the operation as well as men.

TAKING COFFEE.—When Sir John Malcolm, the famous statesman, was sent to Persia as ambassador, he found much that was interesting and peculiar in the customs of the people. It was astonishing, he said, how much depended on coffee and tobacco, men being pleased or offended according to the manner in which these things were offered to them. If the visitor were of higher rank than the host, the latter presented the refreshments himself, and did not himself partake of them till ordered to do so. If the rank were equal, host and guest exchanged pipes, the former presented the first cup of coffee, and took the next himself. If the visitor were of somewhat inferior rank, he was allowed to smoke his own pipe, and a servant, at a certain nod, gave him the first cup of coffee; but if he were of much lower rank, the host asserted his position by taking the first cup, and then commanding the servant, by wave of hand, to help the guest. When a visitor arrived coffee and pipes were called for to welcome him, but a second call for them was the sign that he might leave, though this part of the etiquette varied according to the relative rank and intimacy of the persons concerned.

POLITENESS is a debt due to ourselves.

A WOMAN'S BARGAIN.

BY C. J.

You will love me? Ah, I know;
As men love—no better, dear.
Worship? Yes, a month or so.
Tenderness? Perhaps a year.

After that, the quiet sense
Of possession, careless care,
And the calm indifference
That all married lovers wear.

Blame you, dearest? Not at all;
As Fate made you, so you stand;
As Fate made you, so you fall,
Far below love's high demand.

Yet how strange is love's deep law:
I can look you through and through,
Tracing plainly Nature's flaw
In the heart she gave to you.

Knowing all my heart must stake,
All the danger, all the fear,
And yet glad, even so, to make
This, my losing bargain, dear!

LIGHT AT LAST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A BROKEN WEDDING RING," "THORNS AND BLOSSOMS," "WHICH LOVED HIM BEST?" ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.—[CONTINUED.]

DON'T ask that," was the reply.

"Why shouldn't I? Oh, I see! You think she is out above us—and so she is, in more senses than one. What's the matter with you, Filton? Your hands shake! You shouldn't take a trifle to heart."

"It is about as much as I can bear," replied Charlford.

"I see a change in you in many ways. It's through living with a different set of people, and being away from what you were accustomed to. Ah, well, the world is a very queer place, and there are queer folk enough in it!"

"Yourself for one," said Charlford. "But isn't it late? As we're to meet again, it would be wise not to linger."

"I'm off! Good night. I feel very sleepy all at once. I'll get a bed at the 'Crow and Eagle,' and run up to London by the early train."

"Yes," said Charlford, catching his breath.

"Don't be a day over the time for paying my next instalment, or I shall consider our bargain void."

"No fear!" answered Mabel's father very drily.

"I ought to have none," replied the other, with a low cough.

"You are in luck," said Mr. Charlford, with an unpleasant intonation of voice which his companion noted.

"What do you mean?" he cried. "Fair play now, by Jove, or——"

He did not finish his sentence, but it was full of menace.

"Rather it is I who should ask what you mean," said Mabel's father. "Perhaps your brain is tired to-night. Sleep, and to-morrow you will think more clearly."

"Well, keep faith with me, and I will keep faith with you," replied the man—"otherwise I shall know how to retaliate."

"Who doubts it?" said Charlford, laughing. "There—don't be foolish! Get to the 'Crow and Eagle,' and sleep off your suspicions."

The man waved his hand, and, without response in words, went down the passage, crossed the threshold, and was lost to view.

Mabel's father followed, and stood gazing after him. Then he began to mutter incoherently to himself.

The trembling girl, listening from the now open door of her hiding-place, held her breath to catch the words, but could not distinguish them.

She could conceal herself no longer—she must show herself—must wring from her father a promise that he would satisfy the man's demand at any cost if his own safety were involved, and let her be the negotiator between them.

"When once the man is out of the country, then at least I shall be able to breathe without this dreadful horror on me!" she thought. "Father cannot harm him there! Oh, Heaven, have pity! Did my own father try to harm him? Oh, how shall I bear this?"

With her nerves at their utmost tension, and feeling that she dared not shrink from a task which would half kill her, Mabel emerged from the recess, and remained with her eyes fixed upon the door, ready to meet her father, to go through an interview which could have only one result—the destruction of her own happiness.

But that necessity she accepted with stern resolve—how should she hesitate when a fellow-creature's life was at stake?

Her father stood long at the door by which his late companion had passed out. Now and then a low sound of discordant laughter reached her ears.

What was he meditating that he could laugh thus after such an interview?

"Ah," thought Charlford, as he prepared to shut the door, "he has gone just a trifle too far with me! Eight thousand pounds to begin with; then four thousand; and now he demands fifteen thousand from me and ten thousand from John Charlford. Ha, ha! But he really seems bent on his own destruction!"

Then her father closed and barred the side-door softly.

"The 'Crow and Eagle'—the 'Crow and Eagle,'" he muttered. "What will John think of it when he reads the—the account in the papers? Let him think what he will, he will be the gainer."

Muttering thus, he stole back along the passage towards his own room.

He was not in his usual calm cool temper ready for any emergency, eager to find fault, quick to assert his own will.

For once he was glad that no eyes were upon him; he must rest, collect himself, be armed at all points for the coming day, and all that it might bring.

"I have borne with him long enough," he murmured; "and, fool as he is, he did not know where to stop! He goaded me to it. It was his own doing."

Mabel, half hidden by the cabinet and by the intervening pieces of furniture, could not be seen immediately as he re-entered the room, and she caught the last sentence which fell from her father's lips—"It was his own doing."

No doubt now remained in her mind as to his intentions towards the man who had just left him.

Her eyes grew dim. She tried to cry, "Father—father!" but could not articulate.

Then Mr. Charlford, advancing into the room, caught sight of her standing as if transfixed with horror and with grief.

"Mabel," he cried, his face assuming a livid hue, "why are you here?"

With a stifled exclamation she sprang towards him, then fell at his feet.

"Why am I here?" she gasped. "Why, Heaven must have sent me, father, in order that I might save you! Oh, father, let me save you! You will be glad all the rest of your life!"

"Save me?" he echoed, completely overwhelmed for the moment, doubtful how to answer her, uncertain as to how much she knew.

"Yes, father—yes! Listen!"

She sprang to her feet, and spoke in a low and unsteady voice.

"Already, unknown to you, I have saved you! I—I poured away—that which you meant him to drink! He has not drunk it! Are you not thankful, father? And I will stand by you to the end, if you will only let me."

At her words he staggered backwards; he could not speak in answer to her mingled pleading and accusation.

Pierced to the soul as she was by this mute confession of his guilt, Mabel bore up bravely.

"Yes. Look up, father," she whispered—"you are saved! Henceforth let me transact all your business with that man. Do not allow yourself ever to see him again. And I—I will be as silent as the grave—I will never breathe a hint of what has happened to Dick or to any human creature. Together we will get that enemy of yours out of the country, and then you will be at peace. And I will not ask to know what he has done; I will ask nothing, father, except that you should keep yourself free from guilt. Take all my fortune, father—every penny—I do not need it now, for I shall never marry, never go into society—and you can pay that man's demands with my money. Only never see him again; let me see him for you. I can do more than you think; and you can trust me."

She joined her hands beseechingly, and her tone grew more and more pleading, as he still did not answer her, but sat with his bowed head between his hands, as if stricken too deeply for speech.

How was she to guess what vile thoughts revolved within his mind?

How was she—guileless as she was, full of high ideas of duty and self-sacrifice—to imagine the ignoble scheme which this man was concocting in order to deceive her and to save himself?

"Answer me, father," she cried. "Oh, listen to me! Am I not ready to give up everything in order that you may be safe and happy?"

Slowly then he uncovered his face and looked at her, meeting her gaze, so full of entreaty, with well-assumed grief and agony.

"My own dear child," he gasped out, "what can you have thought? What must you not have suffered? Oh, I will explain all to you presently—all! But first let me assure you, my angel-child—whom I have never really known till now—that that fearful thing of which you imagine I was guilty is without foundation. Mabel, your father could never have planned such a crime as murder. That which I poured into the glass was but a sleeping draught, made to take effect in a few hours, in order that my cruel enemy might be shipped off to America—whither indeed he intends to go almost immediately. Once out of the country, he would not return—for he dreads crossing the sea—and I could have arranged our business by letter. It must be otherwise now; but, my child, I do not the less feel your tender devotion. Henceforth I will strive to requite it."

Mabel experienced such a revulsion of feeling, such a deep inexpressible thankfulness that her father had not contemplated a crime, that she burst into tears of joy, sobbing out—

"Is what you say true—really true, dear father?"

"My poor child," he returned soothingly, "what can I say to convince you? Nothing perhaps; but let me take a dose myself—then you will credit my assurance."

And he made a movement as though he would have poured something into a glass.

"No, no, father!" cried Mabel. "I am already convinced. Don't, don't drink it! How frightened I should be to see you go into a sleep!"

"My darling Mabel, never were you so dear to me as now. Ah, my child, you have never known, never guessed, the secret of my unhappy life! To-night you must be told it."

"Father, I grieve to give you a moment's pain; but perhaps it is better I should know it—then I might turn my thoughts from it. As it is, night and day I shall say to myself that there is some terrible hidden thing in your life."

"Hidden—yes," he said, in a changed and softened voice—"hidden, and, though terrible, not terrible in the sense of being disgraceful."

"Not disgraceful!" she cried, in a tone of rapture.

Then, after all, she need not be separated from Neville: and she lifted up her eyes in unutterable thankfulness.

CHAPTER XIX.

IF there is nothing disgraceful connected with the secret of your unhappy life, why need you be unhappy, dear father?" asked Mabel, after a pause. "No one need care for misfortune if no disgrace goes with it."

"Dear child, you speak like an unsophisticated pure-hearted girl—as you are," rejoined Mr. Charlford, with a melancholy smile. "But it is quite possible for an innocent man's life to be clouded through no fault of his own. Such is my case; and, since you have heard and felt so much, you must listen to the truth from your father's lips. My dear Mabel, I meant to guard you and Dick and your sisters from a knowledge which could only pain you. To-night that possibility is taken out of my hands—you at least must have past things made clear to you."

"Thank you, father," she murmured, deeply moved. "Tell me very briefly; do not pain yourself by dwelling upon things you would like to forget."

"From this time, Mabel, I will dwell upon the thought of your love and your goodness to me, that will make amends for all. We shall be happier together, more to each other, my child, for these confidences to-night. You will be leaving me for a happier path in life, and the love which will surround you will banish the recollection of these painful moments. But to my tale.

"When you and Dick were almost babies, I left your dear mother to go with your uncle to the West Indies to see my dying cousin, who was enormously wealthy, and who had gone abroad a year before, hoping that the warmth of the tropics would prolong his life.

"We were his nearest, almost his only relatives—it was natural he should wish to see us; and, unwilling as I was to leave your mother, I went with my brother across the Atlantic.

"'You have heard of accidental resemblances so striking as to lead to cases of mistaken identity? Unfortunately I had not been long in attendance on my dying cousin before I found that I myself was an instance of what I have just alluded to. There was a man who often passed me in the street, or whom now and then I ran up against in some shop—a man who regarded me with looks so full of indignation and scorn that at length I addressed him, asking if we had ever met before.

"'Wretch,' he answered, with a menacing gesture, 'do you insult me further by pretending ignorance? You know where we have met before! You know that you have broken your promise not to remain in the same city where she is! And you feign ignorance! Of course you are aware that she is here. If you have a shred of manly feeling, a particle of honor, leave this place before she becomes aware of your presence.'

"I warmly entreated my unknown accuser to suspend his judgment until I had convinced him of his mistake; but in vain. I acquainted him with my name and the object of my journey. He merely became more infuriated.

"'As if two or three years could cheat me of my senses!' he cried. 'Traitor, I should recognise you in any place, even although we have met only once before I encountered you here! If you value your miserable life, quit this city before another sunset!'

"'That is not possible,' I declared; 'and I am a stranger to you—your very name is unknown to me, as mine must be to you. You are under a strange delusion, and I must beg you to leave me.'

"'Leave you!' he exclaimed fiercely. 'Yes, when either you or I shall be stretched lifeless on the sod!'

"With that he rushed upon me, unprepared, defenceless as I was. Stunned by the blow, I fell, and know no more until I found myself in bed in my hotel. It seems that some bystanders interfered to save me, and that my enemy—whom I supposed to be some lunatic—fled. Not till long afterwards did I understand that this man, Arthur Lane, identified me mistakenly with a person who had grievously wronged him, and sown dissension between him and his wife. There had been a fierce quarrel between the two men, and the one to whom I have such an unfortunate resemblance had solemnly sworn never more to molest the other's peace, sacredly promising never to see the wife again, and, moreover, to quit any place where she happened to be. It was this man for whom he mistook me, thinking that I was following his wife, and, disregarding my oath, seeking to steal her affections from him. But, as I have said, this I did not know until my accidental likeness to his enemy had led to a most disastrous result.

"There seems to be a sad fate attaching to some persons. Three weeks or more had passed since my encounter with Arthur Lane. I had recovered from the shock, and had nearly forgotten the circumstance in my daily visits to my poor dying cousin and in my thoughts of home and of your mother, when, one day, feeling oppressed by the heat, restless also with anxiety because of letters I had received from England concerning your mother's health—I was unwilling to leave my dying relative, who implored me to stay with him till the last—I walked to a lonely place outside the city, deeply engrossed by my own thoughts, asking myself what I ought to do in my present difficult position.

"On one hand, there was your dear mother to consider, to whose side I longed to hasten; on the other, there was the consolation I owed to my poor cousin, who was dying in a foreign land, and the end of whose illness was approaching.

"No wonder that my troubled musing rendered me too much absorbed to note what was taking place around me, no wonder that I walked on, my eyes fixed upon the ground, as I pondered what to do. And so I was unconscious that the man Lane who had once before attacked me had dogged my footsteps for some time. No presentiment warned me of my danger, no guardian angel caused me to look up, and be prepared to meet my foe.

"Oh, my dear child, what followed was too cruel and wholly unforeseen—undeserved! Without an instant for preparation, I found myself suddenly called upon to battle with my direst foe, and that for life.

"He sprang upon me—his hold was fierce as that of a madman—yelling out defiance and threats; he swore to have my life's blood. What could I do but defend myself? My opponent however was the more powerful man of the two—the combat was very unequal; but in such straits one fights till the last. My strength was giving way, he was aiming to grip my throat. When I found that I was in such terrible danger, I made a despairing effort and hurled him from me; and he fell, fell backwards, and did not rise again."

"You have killed him, father!" gasped Mabel, as Mr. Charlford paused in his recital, apparently overcome by his emotion.

Slowly he raised his head.

"Rather say that he had killed himself, Mabel. His own fierce anger had made him refuse to listen to any explanation; he had dogged my footsteps, resolved to have vengeance; and he had engaged in a mortal struggle, forcing me to defend myself. As I learned afterwards, he had for years suffered from heart-disease; consequently his mad efforts to kill me caused his own destruction. When he fell, he died from the disease which had already undermined his constitution."

"You are guiltless then, father?" said Mabel softly, when she could speak.

"Guiltless? Yes, my child. The difficulty was to make men think so. I had not recovered from the shock of seeing my enemy fall lifeless at my feet when I heard shouts and found myself pursued. There had been witnesses of our struggle—two or three persons who had seen the combat from an eminence a little way off. I was arraigned for the murder as it was called, and I was weak enough to give a false name in order that the ancient name of Charlford should not be dragged into court."

"Oh, father!" murmured Mabel.

"It was an error, not a crime," said Mr. Charlford with a sigh. "I have lived to understand since then that all concealment is wrong. But to you, my child—my noble child—I am confessing all the truth—the truth I would have spared you.

"Under the name of Filton I stood my trial. There was a full inquiry, and the medical man called to give evidence expressed his opinion that the violent excitement of the struggle had caused Arthur Lane's death, the man being in an advanced stage of heart-disease. My story would have been believed, and I should have been released, but that a brother of the wretched man who had attacked me came forward with false evidence. He swore that he had witnessed our quarrel, which, he said, I had provoked. This asseveration was fatal to my cause. I was condemned."

Mabel shuddered. Never had she experienced such pity for any one as she now did for her father.

Ah, no wonder he was changed—stern, cold—when he had had such bitterness, such unmerited suffering to bear!

"Poor dear father," she whispered, clinging to him. "But you were saved! Oh, how were you saved?"

"How? Ah, my child, I was saved, but in such a manner that I almost wish I had remained in prison! Of course I communicated with my brother, your uncle John. It was he who contrived my escape. I fled Mabel, fled from what was called justice. No one suspected that the so-called criminal Filton was in reality Richard Charlford, a wealthy English gentleman; for during my trial my poor cousin had died, and I had succeeded to half of his enormous wealth. I escaped—gold will do much, and I was preparing to embark for England, when, helped, as I shall always believe, by the very man who had taken a heavy bribe to arrange my escape, Lane's brother traced me, stopped me, and declared he would again denounce me. And your mother meanwhile lay dying without seeing me by her side.

"Can you not, my child, pardon the weakness that in such stress of circumstances induced me to bribe the man to silence? At

any rate, I did so; and your uncle John approved of the action. For a few thousand pounds my false accuser consented to leave me unmolested and to settle in the Far West. And I yielded, Mabel, to his demands, yielded for your mother's sake and for the sake of my young children.

"The nefarious bargain was soon concluded. Once more I sought to leave Jamaica and gain home, when I was laid helpless by an attack of yellow-fever which nearly cost me my life, and did cost me something dearer than life—separation from your mother on her death-bed. When I recovered, she had long been laid in the family vault, and I was a widower. My illness had changed me cruelly, my bitter grief changed me still more; my baby-children had forgotten their father, and the recollection of the past haunted me. Judge, Mabel, whether my accession to great wealth compensated for all this. I must have died but for your uncle John; his devoted affection saved me."

"Poor father!" murmured Mabel, with tender compassion.

"You would have thought this was enough for any human being to undergo, would you not?" continued Mr. Charlford. "If so, you would have been wrong. Years passed in my new and luxurious home—a new place to me among strange people. In a measure I seemed dead to joy; nor could I determine to revisit the place where your mother was taken from me. The shadow of the past was always over me like a dark cloud; but a darker one yet was to come.

"One terrible day I broke open a letter bearing an American post-mark. I had no correspondents across the Atlantic, and I experienced a sudden awful shock; then the blow fell. Arthur Lane's brother had in some way discovered that 'Filton' was not my real name; a visit which he paid to Jamaica and inquiries which he made about the supposed Filton's friends led him to connect your uncle John with me.

"He had by this time spent the money he had wrung from us, and lost no time in tracking out his former victim. He went about his task by seeking out your uncle—wealthy men are easily discovered. He then lay in wait for me.

"Acquaintances he had in England gave him tidings of the wealth of the Charlfords, and told him how one of the brothers had suffered years ago from an attack of yellow-fever caught in the West Indies. He was quick enough to imagine the rest for himself. He wrote demanding more money, and then he came himself. Recognition was instantaneous, and he threatened everything.

"What a story to be connected with one of the Charlfords—just too as my children had grown to be of an age to feel most acutely the least whisper against their father's honor!

"I bribed the wretch once more to silence—I met him in your uncle's grounds. You will forgive me my denial now that you know all, Mabel; for it was for your sake, for Dick's, for Caroline's, that I resolved to hide from you forever the dark story of my bitter past.

"Mabel, that man has gone on increasing his demands, till now he asks fifteen thousand pounds more, and ten thousand from your uncle John, because he knows that he is wealthy and loves me, and that he is sensitive about the family name. Persecuted beyond bearing—goaded, maddened, I resolved to give the wretch a sleeping-draught, ship him off to America, and then transmit to him the sum he demanded first, telling him if that was not enough he might do his worst. I was assured that he would be silent, once out of the country.

"Well, it has been ordered otherwise. Henceforth I will be guided by you, my darling child. But, for your sisters' sakes, for all our sakes, we must manage to quiet our enemy, who might reopen the whole story. Oh, Mabel, our best friends are too ready to believe rumors to our discredit! Think what I should feel if, just as you are about to ally yourself with one of noble birth, our name were dragged before the world in connection with a story which is open to the blackest construction."

Mabel gave a weary sigh. Alas for her hopes!

With this accusation hanging over her father, baseless though it was, she could not wed Neville Wynmore.

That ecstatic dream was over; never would she be the means of joining what might become a dishonored name to that of the Wynmores.

For some minutes she could not speak; she could only place her hand in that of her father in token of sympathy.

"Neville—oh, my love!" she cried to herself. "It is good-bye for ever in this world!"

Her father watched her narrowly.

"Mabel," he said presently, "look up, my dear girl! You said yourself that I was unfortunate, but not disgraced."

"Yes—yes, father, because you are innocent," she answered softly, but in a pathetic tone. "Still do you not see that I cannot consent to marry Neville? I will be forever silent—silent as the grave—but he and I must not meet again."

"Mabel, what absurd notions have come into your head?" he cried harshly. "There is nothing to prevent your marrying him. I am an innocent man."

"True, father; but you could not prove your innocence in the sight of all the world; and I must never bring Neville's name into disrepute. Henceforth I must live to make you happy, not myself. I cannot tell Neville what you have told me, I cannot marry him with something unexplained between us; my only course is to bid him farewell. And, father dear, take all my money, I shall not need it, and satisfy that man's demands. I will see him for you, surely uncle John will go with me! and the man will ask less perhaps when he understands that your daughter is not going to marry a man of title. Perhaps he thought to get money from me after my marriage; but, thank Heaven, that last sorrow is spared me!"

"You rend my heart," exclaimed her father, "by speaking of putting from you all your happiness! Oh, Mabel, it cannot be!"

"It must be!" she answered quietly. "Father, do you yourself see that it must be so? At any moment this man might repeat his dreadful accusations, and our name and story of your trial would be in all the newspapers. How could I marry Neville, not daring to tell him of what has gone before? Oh, there are some things we must renounce, and this is one which I must lose the hope of forever! It is nobody's fault, except that of the wicked man who accuses you; and I ought to be satisfied, father, that you are innocent."

He was frightened when he looked at her pallid face.

If she fainted, how could he summon help, for how could he account for her being up at that hour?

"We will talk of this to-morrow, my dear child," he said. "Try to get some rest to-night, you look quite ill."

"Yes; I will go to my room, father," she answered; "but we must not talk of this again, it is more than I can bear. I am ready, however, night or day, to go and persuade that man to leave you in peace. And I will sign any papers that may be necessary, so that you can use my money. Good night, father dear! I will write to Neville very briefly to acquaint him with my determination. I do not mean to see him any more. If I were dying, I would perhaps say farewell; but I am afraid I shall live for a long, long time to come."

"Do not break my heart, Mabel!"

"No, father, never, I hope. But you must see that I should be deceiving Neville if in these circumstances I allowed our engagement to continue."

She rose tremblingly to her feet as she concluded, and her father kissed and blessed her, then led her from the room, watching till her graceful form and woe-begone face disappeared in the gloom overhead.

"So that danger, as great a one as I have ever encountered, is over!" he muttered, emptying a glass of brandy, and passing his hand over his knitted brow. "I have converted her from a horror-stricken child, silent only from duty, into a warm ally full of compassion and trust. Well done! And now for the future. It will be too annoying if she sticks to her resolve, and I lose the position it would give me in the county to have a daughter married to a man like Lord Wynmore."

CHAPTER XX.

A FEW days after Mabel's agitating interview with her father the county was electrified by the tidings that the marriage between young Lord Wynmore and Mabel Charlford was definitively broken off.

"Can it be true?" asked the Duchess of Grassmere, with quiet eagerness. There was a chance yet then for her life's aim to be realized. "But he was so attached to her, and she seemed so devoted to him!" was the thought which succeeded.

Various rumors followed, vague, contradictory, conflicting; but from them all emerged the astounding facts that the contemplated wedding was not to take place, and that the bride-elect was very ill, so ill that it was uncertain if she could recover.

"There has been a quarrel!" mused the Duchess; and she reflected that quarrels could be healed.

But Mabel herself and the unhappy Neville knew too well that it was nothing so slight as a lovers' disagreement which had parted them.

"For your sake we must part, Neville, my soul's beloved," she had said, as she laid her head upon his shoulder in tearless grief when she bade him farewell, for she had not been able to refuse him a last interview. "Do not make it harder for me by letting my motive transpire to the world. Put down our parting to ill-health. Heaven knows I am ill enough now!" she added, shivering with pain.

"You wring my very soul!" answered Neville. "Mabel, why must we part? I have talked to your father; your resolve has quite cast him down. Evidently he cannot understand it. You say you cannot explain to me. Well, I will not ask you to do so. But I cannot lose you, it would kill me, Mab!"

"I must do what is right, Neville," she responded feebly, then fainted in his arms.

From that day she had refused to see him again.

When he and she next met, she sent him word, it would be in another life.

The curiosity of Mr. Charlford's neighbors and of those who lived near Wynmore Manor was roused to the highest pitch. Some mystery appeared to have caused the separation of the young pair.

But the poor bride-elect lay ill and silent through the long days.

First the family medical attendant and then a great London physician came to prescribe for her; but all in vain.

Innumerable friends called at Charlford House to ask after poor, pretty Mabel, but to all the reply was the same, she was very ill, and forbidden to see any one. There was no change. Many friends too called at the Manor; but Lord Wynmore saw no one.

He was as closely shut up as she whom he mourned, though he was not like her, stricken with sore sickness.

By-and-by there was a variation in the hitherto unvarying answer to the inquiries concerning Mabel.

The doctors had ordered immediate change of air, and her father had made arrangements that she should be moved with the utmost care.

And, as complete quiet was enjoined, she was at first to be accompanied only by the trained nurse and by her maid. At this news Lord Wynmore flew to Charlford House again, but he found that his lost love had already been moved from home.

"Where have you sent her?" he asked almost fiercely, in his despair.

It was her sister Caroline who saw him, for Mr. Charlford had accompanied his suffering child.

"My father has taken my sister to a lovely country cottage surrounded by woods and fields, where she can have the complete solitude recommended, together with fresh air. I begged leave to keep her company, Lord Wynmore, but was told not to ask it for the present. It is very hard to see her as she is—perfectly listless, caring for nothing."

"I must see her, Caroline," was all he said.

Miss Charlford gave him the address; and the next day Neville presented himself at Mabel's new abode.

With profound emotion he gazed at the house which enclosed all that he held most dear; but there were no signs of cheerfulness about the place, no flowers, no open windows; all appeared dull and cold. Another glance showed him that there were iron bars to all the windows.

He rang hastily at the door; a neat maid-servant quickly answered the summons.

"Take my card to Miss Charlford," he said, in a voice choked by emotion. "Is Mr. Charlford here?"

"Yes, sir, my lord; but Miss Charlford, poor young lady, doesn't see any visitors, she isn't fit for that. But I'll take up your card, my lord."

"Bring me an answer from her, and here is a sovereign for you," said Neville, lowering his voice.

"I'll be sure that Miss Charlford has your card, my lord."

And with that the maid ushered him into a neatly-furnished room looking on to a long garden at the back, where an old man was mowing the grass.

At the end of five minutes the maid returned with a note in Mabel's handwriting. Neville tore it open, and read—

"I will not reprove you for coming here for tidings of me, for I know well that I should follow you to the ends of the earth if we could change places. But I dare not see you. We parted forever when we last said farewell. My heart follows you, but do not try to see me again.

"M. C."

"Where is she?" said Neville, in a husky voice, to the waiting servant.

"In her own room, my lord, where she sits night and day. 'Tis a bad case, the doctors say."

"Good heavens, they told me there was no danger! What is the matter?" exclaimed Lord Wynmore, heart-stricken.

"Don't you know, my lord? Then it'll come with a shock on you. Miss Charlford has lost her reason."

He staggered back. His own bright lovely Mabel insane!

Was this the meaning of bringing her to the cottage?

He sank down upon a chair, overwhelmed with misery, but was roused by hearing Mr. Charlford's voice and step, and started up to meet him.

"Why was I not told?" he cried, wringing the elder man's hand. "Why was I not told? But it cannot be true! What do the doctors say? Has she had every possible advice?"

"The very best. You can talk to Doctor Crane yourself," answered the other, in a low agitated voice. "I could not bear the idea of sending my darling child to a private asylum, so I have taken this place for her, and she has a trained nurse to attend on her. It is not thought desirable to let her sisters come here yet."

"Why was I not told?" repeated Neville frantically.

"We hoped against hope," said Mr. Charlford, "and even here we meant to have tried every means of recovery before you were tortured with the knowledge of the truth. Have you asked to see her? Does she know that you are here?"

"Yes, and she has written to me; but she refuses to see me. She writes very connectedly, however. Read her note, Mr. Charlford."

"I was about to beg you to let me look at it," said her father. "Unhappy child!" he then exclaimed, as if in deep distress. "You perceive the weight on her mind which cannot be shaken off? Alas, when these delusions first took shape, we little dreamed of the point to which they would grow!"

"Never did I see the least symptom of insanity!" cried Neville, choking with agonized anxiety and doubt.

"The first symptoms ought never to be neglected, but they are seldom easy to detect," returned Mr. Charlford gloomily. "Still I ought to have seen that there was something unnatural in the fact that my poor child was depressed with this baseless idea of some disgrace attaching to the family name, which she feared to associate with yours. She had everything bright around her, everything which could make her lot enviable, yet she went about with this load at her heart."

"I cannot believe her depression can have reached insanity. Let me see her!" implored Mabel's lover.

"Is it well to throw her into such extreme agitation, Lord Wynmore? She was brought here for the sake of absolute quiet, and in order to be removed from the danger of any sudden shock to her nervous system; and she has herself refused to see you. Is it not better, since matters are in their present sad state, to wait until we feel on safer ground? But you shall not go till you have seen her, although it must be unknown to her. Come with me to the back of the house; from the court-yard one gets a good view of the garden, where, just now, she will be walking with her attendant. Oh, Wynmore, I am broken-hearted. What a different fate I had pictured for my darling. You yourself know how much we all rejoiced in her sunny prospects. And now——"

He broke off, as if emotion prevented him from dwelling on his sorrow.

Neville, completely mastered by the misery of thinking Mabel mentally afflicted, could not find words to reply.

Her tormenting idea of some hidden disgrace attaching to her father a delusion. It was the very last supposition at which he would have arrived.

Mabel insane! As well doubt his own sanity! he would have said, with confident security, a few short hours before. But now how could he doubt?

It was true that her path in life was fair, and that its fairness was completely blotted out by a seemingly baseless idea of some concealed disgrace.

Yet the Charlfords were well known among families of position; they had lived for years in his neighborhood; no one had ever brought any accusation or whispered a word of slander against either of the brothers.

But Mabel mad! It seemed wilder than any delusion from which the insane suffer.

Unable to pursue the conversation, Neville sat down, burying his face in his hands; nor did Mr. Charlford interrupt his sad reverie. The young man looked up at length to say—

"I must see the physicians who have prescribed for her; I will go to town to-day."

"Do so, and I will see you there to-morrow," said Mr. Charlford. "Call at my hotel in Jermyn Street and tell me what Doctor Crane says. He it is who saw my dear child and he is a great authority. I am following his advice in providing this complete retirement combined with fresh air."

"I do not doubt that, Mr. Charlford; but I cannot rest without seeing the physician myself, and talking over the case with him. Of course I will call in Jermyn Street as soon as I leave Doctor Crane's. But before I go let me have a glimpse of Mabel, as you suggested."

The wretched young man followed Mr. Charlford into the court behind the house, and from his stand-point could easily see her whom he so tenderly worshipped taking her listless exercise on the long green walk on the other side of the railings which divided the yard from the garden.

Neville gazed with hungry eyes at her slight and graceful figure. Cold and dark had the days been to him since he and she parted.

How eagerly he looked at her now, not to attract her attention to himself, but to discover whether there was anything in her walk or her demeanor which might suggest insanity.

Her manner was not encouraging. She paced up and down slowly, dejectedly, never raising her sad eyes from the ground. Whatever was the impression under which she labored, it was evidently real enough to her. Neville's heart was torn anew.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

For many years now a strong effort has been made in Germany to get rid of the German characters in printing and writing, and to adopt the Roman characters. There is no reason why this effort should not be successful; indeed there is good reason why it should be successful; for the German characters are very trying to the eyes and account in a great measure for the prevalence of near-sightedness amongst Germans. All this, however, and a great deal more, go for nothing. Bismarck is in love with the German characters, and with these characters Germans will have to put up so long as they have Bismarck to rule over them. If any official documents be printed in Roman characters, he returns them and orders them to be reprinted. Just lately he has on this ground sent back several blue-books issued by the Berlin magistracy, with instructions that they be reprinted. Everybody is against him in this matter; still, Bismarck has his way, as the man of iron will always must have.

SCENE—A French court of assizes. Judge: "Prisoner, you have beaten this poor man so cruelly that he is dead." Prisoner, vehemently: "He attacked me first. Besides, he was a rascal, and gave us much trouble on the farm. It is not my fault if he was an idiot." Judge, with severity: "You should remember that idiots are men like you and me!"

DAUGHTER: "Mamma, Mr. Blank proposed to me last night." Mother: "Did you accept him, daughter?" Daughter: "Yes, mamma." Mother: "Has he any money, daughter?" Daughter: "Only $1,000 a year, mamma." Mother: "Well, daughter, handle him carefully till spring. Possibly you can pick up something better meanwhile."

A MOTHER'S PRAYER.

BY J. C.

Wherever he may be, oh, God, protect him:
Lead him in paths wherein no danger lies:
Lead him in pastures, blossom-decked and sunny,
Beside still waters, under smiling skies.

Guide him in safety, far from youthful folly:
Keep his dear feet for ever in the right;
When storm-clouds gather darkly round about him,
Lead him, oh, Father, onward to the light.

From Pleasure's luring, give him strength to follow
Where duty leads, though lonesome be the way:
Oh, keep him pure of heart, and crown his efforts,
And bring him back to me again some day.

Oh, God! protect my boy who still must struggle,
And make his pathway smooth beneath his feet,
And lead us safely to the glad new country
Where love and happiness shall be complete.

RANK AND RICHES.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

CHAPTER II.—(CONTINUED.)

THERE was silence between the husband and wife. Beaucourt was the first to speak again.

"After what you have just heard, do you persist in your jealousy of that lady, and your jealousy of me?" he asked.

"I have behaved cruelly to her and to you. I am ashamed of myself," was all she said in reply.

That expression of sorrow, so simple and so true, did not appeal in vain to the gentler side of Beaucourt's nature. He kissed his wife's hand; he tried to console her.

"You may forgive me," she answered, "I cannot forgive myself. That poor lady's last words have made my heart ache. What I said to her in anger I ought to have said generously. Why should she not wait for you? After your life with me—a life of kindness, a life of self-sacrifice—you deserve your reward. Promise me that you will marry the woman you love after my death has released you."

"You distress me, and needlessly distress me," he said. "What you are thinking of, my dear, can never happen; no, not even if——"

He left the rest unsaid.

"Not even if you were free?" she asked quietly.

"Not even then."

She looked towards the next room.

"Go in, Howel, and bring Mrs. Evelin back; I have something important to say to her."

The discovery that she had left the house caused no fear that she had taken to flight with the purpose of concealing herself.

There was a prospect before the poor lonely woman which might be trusted to preserve her from despair, to say the least of it.

During her brief residence in Beaucourt's house she had shown to Lady Howel a letter received from a relation, who had emigrated to New Zealand with her husband and her infant children some years since.

They had steadily prospered; they were living in comfort, and they wanted for nothing but a trustworthy governess to teach their children.

The mother had accordingly written, asking if her relative in England could recommend a competent person, and offering a liberal salary.

In showing the letter to Lady Howel, Mrs. Evelin had said, "If I had not been so happy as to attract your notice, I might have offered to be the governess myself."

Assuming that it had now occurred to her to act on this idea, Lady Howel felt assured that she would apply for advice either to the publishers who had recommended her, or to Lord Howel's old friend.

Beaucourt at once offered to make the inquiries which might satisfy his wife that she had not been mistaken. Readily accepting his proposal, she asked at the same time for a few minutes of delay.

"I want to say to you," she explained, "what I had in my mind to say to Mrs. Evelin. Do you object to tell me why she refused to marry you? I couldn't have done it in her place."

"You would have done it, my dear, as I think, if her misfortune had been your misfortune."

With those prefatory words he told the miserable story of Mrs. Evelin's marriage.

Lady Howel's sympathies, strongly excited, appeared to have led her to a conclusion which she was not willing to communicate to her husband. She asked him, rather abruptly, if he would leave it to her to find Mrs. Evelin.

"I promise," she added, "to tell you what I am thinking of, when I come back."

In two minutes more she was ready to go out, and had hurriedly left the house.

* * * * *

After a long absence Lady Howel returned, accompanied by Dick. His face and manner betrayed unusual agitation; Beaucourt noticed it.

"I may well be excited," Dick declared, "after what I have heard, and after what we have done. Lady Howel, yours is the brain that thinks to some purpose. Make our report, I wait for you."

But my lady preferred waiting for Dick. He consented to speak first, for the thoroughly characteristic reason that he could 'get over it in no time."

"I shall try the old division," he said, "into First, Second, and Third. Don't be afraid; I am not going to preach, quite the contrary; I am going to be quick about it. First, then, Mrs. Evelin has decided, under sound advice, to go to New Zealand. Second, I have telegraphed to her relations at the other end of the world to tell them that she is coming. Third, and last, Farleigh and Halford have sent to the office, and secured a berth for her in the next ship that sails, date the day after to-morrow. Done in half a minute. Now, Lady Howel."

"I will begin and end in half a minute too," she said, "if I can. First," she continued, turning to her husband, "I found Mrs. Evelin at your friend's house. She kindly let me say all that I could say for the relief of my poor heart. Secondly ——"

She hesitated, smiled uneasily, and came to a full stop.

"I can't do it, Howel," she confessed; "I must speak to you as usual, or I can never get on. Saying many things in few words, if the ladies who assert our Rights will forgive me for confessing it, is an accomplishment in which we are completely beaten by the men. You must have thought me rude, my dear, for leaving you very abruptly, without a word of explanation. The truth is, I had an idea in my head, and I kept it to myself (old people are proverbially cautious, you know) till I had first found out whether it was worth mentioning. When you were speaking of the wretched creature who had claimed Mrs. Evelin's husband as her own, you said she was an inveterate drunkard. A woman in that state of degradation is capable, as I persist in thinking, of any wickedness. I suppose this put it into my head to doubt her, no; I mean, to wonder whether Mrs. Evelin, do you know that she keeps her husband's name by his own entreaty addressed to her on his death-bed, oh, I am losing myself in a crowd of words of my own collecting! Say the rest of it for me, Sir Richard."

"No, Lady Howel. Not unless you call me "Dick."

"Then say it for me, Dick."

"No, not yet, on reflection. Dick is too short, say 'Dear Dick.'"

"Dear Dick, there."

"Thank you, my lady. Now we had better remember that your husband is present."

He turned to Beaucourt.

"Lady Howel had the idea," he proceeded, "which ought to have presented itself to you and to me. It was a serious misfortune (as she thought) that Mr. Evelin's sufferings in his last illness, and his wife's anxiety while she was nursing him, had left them unfit to act in their own defence. They might otherwise not have submitted to the drunken wretch's claim, without first making sure that she had a right to advance it. Has she told the truth, or told a lie, when the clergyman appealed to her to declare it, if there was any impediment to her marriage? To that serious question we now mean to find an answer. With Mrs. Evelin's knowledge of the affair to help us, we have discovered the woman's address to begin with. She keeps a small tobacconist's shop at the town of Grailey in the north of England. The rest is in the hands of my lawyer. If we make the discovery that we all hope for, we have your wife to thank for it."

He paused, and looked at his watch.

"I've got an appointment at the club. The committee will blackball the best fellow that ever lived if I don't go and stop them. Good-bye."

The last day of Mrs. Evelin's sojourn in England was memorable in more ways than one.

On the first occasion in Beaucourt's experience of his married life, his wife wrote to him instead of speaking to him, although they were both in the house at the time. It was a little note, only containing these words—

"I thought you would like to say good-bye to Mrs. Evelin. I have told her to expect you in the library, and I will take care that you are not disturbed."

Waiting at the window of her sitting-room on the upper floor, Lady Howel perceived that the delicate generosity of her conduct had been gratefully felt. The interview in the library barely lasted for five minutes.

She saw Mrs. Evelin leave the house with her veil down. Immediately afterwards Beaucourt ascended to his wife's room to thank her.

Carefully as he had endeavored to hide them, the traces of tears in his eyes told her how cruelly the parting scene had tried him. It was a bitter moment for his admirable wife.

"Do you wish me dead?" she asked, with sad self-possession. "Live," he said, "and live happily, if you wish to make me happy too."

He drew her to him and kissed her forehead. Lady Howel had her reward.

CHAPTER III.

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

FURNISHED with elaborate instructions to guide him, which included golden materials for bribery, a young Jew holding the place of third clerk in the office of Dick's lawyer was sent to the town of Grailey to make discoveries.

In the matter of successfully instituting private inquiries, he was justly considered to be a match for any two Christians who might try to put obstacles in his way. His name was Moses Jackling.

Entering the cigar shop, the Jew discovered that he had presented himself at a critical moment.

A girl and a man were standing behind the counter.

The girl looked like a maid-of-all-work: she was rubbing the tears out of her eyes with a big red fist. The man, smart in manner and shabby in dress, received the stranger with a peremptory eagerness to do business.

"Now, then! what for you?"

Jackling bought the worst cigar he had ever smoked in the course of an enormous experience of bad tobacco, and tried a few questions, with this result.

The girl had lost her place; the man was in possession, and the stock and furniture had been seized for debt. Jackling thereupon assumed the character of a creditor, and asked to speak with the mistress.

"She's too ill to see you, sir," the girl said.

"Tell the truth, you fool," cried the man in possession.

He led the way to a door with glass in the upper part of it, which opened into a parlor behind the shop. As soon as his back was turned, Jackling whispered to the maid, "When I go, slip out after me; I've got something for you."

The man lifted the curtain over the glass.

"Look through," he said, "and see what's the matter with her for yourself."

Jackling discovered the mistress flat on her back on the floor, helplessly drunk. That was enough for the clerk, so far. He took leave of the man in possession, with the one joke which never wears out in the estimation of Englishmen; the joke that foresees the drunkard's headache in the morning.

In a minute or two more the girl showed herself, carrying an empty jug. She had been sent for the man's beer, and she was expected back soon.

Jackling, having first overwhelmed her by a present of five shillings, proposed another appointment in the evening. The maid promised to be at the place of meeting; and in memory of the five shillings she kept her word.

"What wages do you get?" was the first question that astonished her.

"Three pounds a year, sir," the unfortunate creature replied.

"All paid?"

"Only one pound paid, and I say it's a crying shame."

"Say what you like, my dear, so long as you listen to me. I want to know everything that your mistress says and does, first when she's drunk, and then when she's sober. Wait a bit; I haven't done yet. If you tell me everything you can remember, mind, everything, I'll pay the rest of your wages."

Madly excited by this golden prospect, the victim of domestic service instantly answered inarticulately with a terrible scream.

Jackling's right hand and left hand entered his pockets, and appeared again holding two sovereigns separately between two fingers and thumbs.

From that moment he was at liberty to empty the maid-of-all-work's memory of every saying and doing that it contained.

The sober moments of the mistress yielded little or nothing to investigation. The report of her drunken moments produced something worth hearing.

There were two men whom it was her habit to revile bitterly in her cups. One of them was Mr. Evelin, whom she abused, sometimes for the small allowance that he made to her; sometimes for dying before she could prosecute him for bigamy. Her drunken remembrances of the other man were associated with two names.

She called him "Septimus," she called him "Darts;" and she despised him occasionally for being a "common sailor." It was clearly demonstrated that he was one man, and not two.

Whether he was "Septimus," or whether he was "Darts," he had always committed the same atrocities.

He had taken her money away from her; he had called her by an atrocious name; and he had knocked her down on more than one occasion.

Provided with this information, Jackling dismissed the girl, and paid a visit to her mistress the next day.

The miserable woman was exactly in the state of nervous prostration (after the excess of the previous evening) which offered to the clerk his best chance of gaining his end.

He presented himself as the representative of friends, bent on helping her, whose modest benevolence had positively forbidden him to mention their names.

"What sum of money must you pay," he asked, "to get rid of the man in possession?"

Too completely bewildered to speak, her trembling hand offered to him a slip of paper on which the amount of the debt and the expenses was set forth: 51 l. 13s. 10d.

With some difficulty the Jew preserved his gravity.

"Very well," he resumed. "I will make it up to sixty pounds (to set you going again) on two conditions."

She suddenly recovered her power of speech.

"Give me the money!" she cried, with greedy impatience of delay.

"First condition," he continued, without noticing the interruption; "you are not to suffer, either in purse or person, if you give us the information that we want."

She interrupted him again.

"Tell me what it is, and be quick about it."

"Second condition," he went on as imperturbably as ever; "you take me to the place where I can find the certificate of your marriage to Septimus Darts."

Her eyes glared at him like the eyes of a wild animal. Furies, hysterics, faintings, denials, threats, Jackling endured them all by turns.

It was enough for him that his desperate guess of the evening before had hit the mark on the morning after.

When she had completely exhausted herself he returned to the experiment which he had already tried with the maid. Well aware of the advantage of exhibiting gold instead of notes, when the object is to tempt poverty, he produced the promised bribe in sovereigns, pouring them playfully backwards and forwards from one big hand to the other.

The temptation was more than the woman could resist. In another half-hour the two were traveling together to a town in one of the midland counties.

The certificate was found in the church register, and duly copied. It also appeared that one of the witnesses to the marriage was still living.

His name and address were duly noted in the clerk's pocket-book. Subsequent inquiry at the office of the Customs Comptroller discovered the name of Septimus Darts on the captain's official list of the crew of an outward bound merchant vessel.

With this information, and with a photographic portrait to complete it, the man was discovered, alive and hearty, on the return of the ship to her port.

His wife's explanation of her conduct included the customary excuse that she had every reason to believe her husband to be dead, and was followed by a bold assertion that she had married Mr. Evelin for love.

In Moses Jackling's opinion she lied when she said this, and lied again when she threatened to prosecute Mr. Evelin for bigamy.

"Take my word for it," said this new representative of the Unbelieving Jew, "she would have exorted money from him if he had lived."

Delirium tremens left this question unsettled, and closed the cigar shop soon afterwards, under the authority of death.

The good news, telegraphed to New Zealand, was followed by a letter containing details.

At a later date a telegram arrived from Mrs. Evelin. She had reached her destination, and had received the despatch which told her that she had been lawfully married.

A letter (to be addressed to Lady Howel) was promised by the next mail.

While the necessary term of delay was still unexpired, the newspapers received intelligence of a volcanic eruption in the northern island of the New Zealand group. Later particulars, announcing a terrible destruction of life and property, included the homestead in which Mrs. Evelin was living.

The farm had been overwhelmed, and every member of the household had perished.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NIGHT NURSE.

ENDORSED as follows: "Reply from Sir Richard, addressed to Farleigh and Halford."

"Your courteous letter has been forwarded to my house in the country.

"I really regret that you should have thought it necessary to apologize for troubling me. Your past kindness to the unhappy Mrs. Evelin gives you a friendly claim on me which I gladly recognize as you shall soon see.

"'The extraordinary story,' as you very naturally call it, is nevertheless true. I am the only person, now at your disposal, who can speak as an eyewitness of the events.

"In the first place, I must tell you that the dreadful intelligence received from New Zealand had an effect on Lord Howel Beaucourt which shocked his friends and inexpressibly distressed his admirable wife. I can only describe him, at that time, as a man struck down in mind and body alike.

"Lady Howel was unremitting in her efforts to console him. He was thankful and gentle; it was true that no complaint could be made of him. It was equally true that no change for the better rewarded the devotion of his wife.

"The state of feeling which this implied embittered the disappointment which Lady Howel naturally felt. As some relief to her overburdened mind, she associated herself with the work of mercy carried on under the superintendence of the rector of the parish. I thought he was wrong in permitting a woman, at her advanced time of life, to run the risk encountered in visiting the sick and suffering poor at their own dwelling-places. Circumstances, however, failed to justify my dread of the perilous influences of infection and foul air. The one untoward event that happened seemed to be too trifling to afford any cause for anxiety. Lady Howel caught cold.

"Unhappily, she treated that apparently trivial accident with indifference. Her husband and I vainly entreated her to remain at home. On one of her charitable visits she was overtaken by a heavy fall of rain; and a shivering fit seized her on her return to the house. At her age the results were serious. A bronchial attack followed. In a week more, the dearest and best of women had left us nothing to love but the memory of the dead.

"Her last words were faintly whispered to me in her husband's presence: 'Take care of him,' the dying woman said, 'when

I am gone.'

"No effort of mine to be worthy of that sacred trust was left untried. How could I hope to succeed where she had failed? My house in London and my house in the country were both open to Beaucourt; I entreated him to live with me, or (if he preferred it) to be my guest for a short time only, or (if he wished to be alone) to choose the place of abode which he liked best for his solitary retreat. With sincere expressions of gratitude his inflexible despair refused my proposals.

"In one of the ancient 'Inns,' built centuries since for the legal societies of London he secluded himself from friends and acquaintances alike.

"One by one, they were driven from his dreary chambers by a reception which admitted them with patient resignation, and held out little encouragement to return. After an interval of no great length I was the last of his friends who intruded on his solitude.

"Poor Lady Howel's will (excepting some special legacies) had left her fortune to me in trust, on certain conditions with which it is needless to trouble you. Beaucourt's resolution not to touch a farthing of his dead wife's money laid a heavy responsibility on my shoulders; the burden being ere long increased by forebodings on which alarmed me on the subject of his health.

"He devoted himself to the reading of old books, treating (as I was told) of that branch of useless knowledge generally described as 'occult science.' These unwholesome studies so absorbed him, that he remained shut up in his badly ventilated chambers for weeks together, without once breathing the outer air even for a few minutes.

"Such defiance of the ordinary laws of nature as this could end but in one way; his health steadily declined, and feverish symptoms showed themselves. The doctor said plainly, 'There is no chance for him if he stays in this place.'

"Once more he refused to be removed to my London house. The development of the fever, he reminded me, might lead to consequences dangerous to me and to my household. He had heard of one of the great London hospitals, which reserved certain rooms for the occupation of persons capable of paying for the medical care bestowed on them.

"Many advantages, and no objections of importance, were presented by this course of proceeding. We conveyed him to the hospital without a moment's loss of time.

"When I think of the dreadful illness that followed, and when I recall the days of unrelieved suspense passed at the bedside, I have not courage enough to dwell on this part of my story.

"Besides, you know already that Beaucourt recovered, or, as I might more correctly describe it, that he was snatched back to life when the grasp of death was on him. Of this happier period of his illness I have something to say which may surprise and interest you.

"On one of the earlier days of his convalescence my visit to him was paid later than usual. A matter of importance, neglected while he was in danger, had obliged me to leave town for a few days, after there was nothing to be feared. Returning, I had missed the train which would have brought me to London in better time.

"My appearance evidently produced in Beaucourt a keen feeling of relief. He requested the day-nurse, waiting in the room to leave us by ourselves.

"'I was afraid you might not have come to me to-day,' he said. 'My last moments would have been embittered, my friend, by your absence.'

"'Are you anticipating your death,' I asked, 'at the very time when the doctors answer for your life?'

"'The doctors have not seen her,' he said; 'I saw her last night.'

"'Of whom are you speaking?'

"'Of my lost love, who perished in the outbreak of the volcano. Twice her spirit has appeared to me. I shall see her for the third time to-night; I shall follow her to the better world.'

"Had the delirium of the worst time of the fever taken possession of him again? In unutterable dread of relapse, I took his hand. The skin was very cool. I laid my fingers on his pulse. It was beating calmly.

"'You think I am wandering in my mind,' he broke out. 'Stay here to-night, I command you, stay! and see her as I have seen her.'

"I quieted him by promising to do what he had asked of me. He had still one more condition to insist on.

"'I won't be laughed at,' he said. 'Promise that you will not repeat to any living creature what I have just told you.'

"My promise satisfied him. He wearily closed his eyes. In a few minutes more his poor weak body was in peaceful repose.

"The day-nurse returned, and remained with us later than usual. Twilight melted into darkness. The room was obscurely lit by a shaded lamp, placed behind a screen that kept the sun out of the sick man's eyes in the daytime.

"'Are we alone?' Beaucourt asked quietly.

"'Yes.'

"'Watch the door.'

"'Why?'

"'You—you will see her on the threshold.'

"As he said those words the door slowly opened. In the dim light I could only discern at first the figure of a woman. She slowly advanced towards me. I saw the familiar face in shadow; the eyes were large and faintly luminous, the eyes of Mrs. Evelin.

"The wild words spoken to me by Beaucourt, the stillness and the obscurity in the room; had their effect, I suppose, on my imagination. You will think me a poor creature when I confess it. For the moment I did assuredly feel a thrill of superstitious terror.

"My delusion was dispelled by a change in her face. Its natural expression of surprise, when she saw me, set my mind free to feel the delight inspired by the discovery that she was a living woman. I should have spoken to her if she had not stopped me by a gesture.

"Beaucourt's voice broke the silence.

"'Ministering Spirit!' he said, 'free me from the life of earth. Take me with you to the life eternal.'

"She made no attempt to enlighten him. 'Wait,' she answered calmly, 'wait and rest.'

"Silently obeying her, he turned his head on the pillow; we saw his face no more.

"I have related the circumstances exactly as they happened; the ghost story which report has carried to your ears has no other foundation than this.

"Mrs. Evelin led the way to that farther end of the room in which the screen stood. Placing ourselves behind it, we could converse in whispers without being heard. Her first words told me that she had been warned by one of the hospital doctors to respect my friend's delusion for the present. His mind partook in some degree of the weakness of his body, and he was not strong enough yet to bear the shock of discovering the truth.

"She had been saved almost by a miracle.

"Released from the ruins of the house destroyed by the eruption, she had been laid with the bodies of her relatives awaiting burial. Happily for her, an English traveler visiting the island was among the first men who volunteered to render help. He had been in practice as a medical man, and he saved her from being buried alive. Nearly a month passed before she was strong enough to bear removal to Wellington (the capital city), and to be received into the hospital.

"I asked why she had not telegraphed or written to me.

"'When I was strong enough to write,' she said, 'I was strong enough to bear the sea voyage to England. The expenses so nearly exhausted my small savings that I had no money to spare for the telegraph.'

"On her arrival in London, only a few days since, she had called on me at the time when I had left home on the business which I have already mentioned. She had not heard of Lady Howel's death, and had written ignorantly to prepare that good friend for seeing her.

"The messenger sent with the letter had found the house in the occupation of strangers, and had been referred to the agent employed in letting it. She went herself to this person, and so heard that Lord Howel Beaucourt had lost his wife, and was reported to be dying in one of the London hospitals.

"'If he had been in his usual state of health,' she said, 'it would have been indelicate on my part, I mean it would have seemed like taking a selfish advantage of the poor lady's death, to have let him know that my life had been saved, in any other way than by writing to him. But when I heard he was dying I forgot all customary considerations.

"His name was so well known in London that I easily discovered at what hospital he had been received. There I heard that the report was false, and that he was out of danger. I ought to have been satisfied with that, but oh, how could I be so near him and not long to see him? The old doctor with whom I had been speaking discovered I suppose, that I was in trouble about something.

"He was so kind and fatherly, and he seemed to take such interest in me, that I confessed everything to him. After he had made me promise to be careful, he told the night nurse to let me take her place for a little while, when the dim light in the room would not permit his patient to see me too plainly.

"He waited at the door when we tried the experiment. Neither he nor I foresaw that poor Lord Howel would put such a strange interpretation on my presence. The nurse doesn't approve of my coming back, even for a little while only, and taking her place again to-night. She is right. I have had my little glimpse of happiness, and with that little I must be content.'

"What I said in answer to this, and what I did as time advanced, it is surely needless to tell you. You have read the newspapers which announce their marriage and their departure for Italy. What else is there left for me to say?

"There is, perhaps, a word more still wanting.

"Obstinate Lord Howel persisted in refusing to take the fortune that was waiting for him. In this difficulty, the conditions under which I was acting permitted me to appeal to the bride. When she too said no, I was not to be trifled with. I showed her poor Lady Howel's will. After reading the terms in which my dear old friend alluded to her she burst out crying. I interpreted those grateful tears as an expression of repentance for the ill-considered reply which I had just received. As yet, I have not been told that I was wrong."

[THE END.]

As fate is inexorable and not to be moved with tears or reproaches, an excess of sorrow is as foolish as profuse laughter.

WASH AND BE CLEAN.

WHEN or where the first soap was made is not upon historical record. But in the natural course of events, some shrewd observer probably remarked the effect that a mixture of fat or oil with wood ashes (mainly composed of potash,) produced when mixed with water, and out of this hint grew soap. The substance was well known to the ancient Celts, and their word saboun—still used in many old patois of the Latin nations—was adopted by the Greeks.

In those days, however, it was a cosmetique, or external remedy for certain eruptive diseases of the skin, and Pliny writing of it in his Natural History says that it was invented by the Gauls and served to pomade and fix their hair.

In the sacred writings we find, "though thou wash thee with nitre and take much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me," which seems to strengthen the inference that it was considered to be an ointment, rather than a detergent.

The disinterment of Pompeii brought to light the ruins of a soap boiler shop, with several specimens of soap, showing the Romans to be expert in its manufacture, while in the eighth century large factories were erected for its production in both Italy and Spain, and it was introduced into France about four centuries later on. It was not, however, until the end of the 18th century that any real progress was made, and it is, comparatively, only of recent years that it has assumed the importance of a leading industry.

Soaps are infinite in their variety, but we will only speak of two: Hard soaps which result from the use of fat and the alkali, soda, and soft soaps which result from using the alkali, potash.

In order to be of use as cleansing agents, they must be highly soluble in, and easily decomposed by ordinary water.

All fats whensoever they are derived are composed of stearine and oleine—the former a hard, the latter a liquid substance. Stearine is a natural mixture of stearic acid and glycerine, and oleine is made up of glycerine and oleic acid.

When fats are subjected to saponification by melting and boiling them with caustic soda, they are decomposed, the soda, (or alkali) seizing hold of the fatty acids forms soap, while the glycerine thus set free is either purified and used for medicinal or other purposes, or thrown away.

Hard soaps are principally made by good manufacturers from tallow, palm oil, cocoanut oil and lard, but a large number of them are now in the habit of cheapening their production by the use of resin and refuse grease.

The pans in which saponification is effected, are constructed of wrought iron plates, riveted together, and vary very much in size and capacity.

The desired quantity of neutral fat having been placed in the pan with a sufficiency of caustic soda lye, the whole is made to boil with constant stirring, the heat being applied either by means of a steam jacket or steam pipe immersed in the liquid.

To the milky emulsion or creamy fluid thus produced, are constantly stirred in fresh quantities of caustic lye, each addition being stronger than the preceding one, until the mass is distinctly alkaline, or in other words, until the fatty acids have been completely overpowered by the soda.

When the pan is quite full, common salt is added to the boiling mixture, in the proportion of ten pounds to every 100 pounds of fat, the effect of this addition being to render the soap insoluble, and cause it to rise and float upon the surface of the pan.

The liquid itself is now drawn off from below, and the soapy mass is reboiled with fresh but weak lyes and then allowed to cool, after which, it is solidified in rectangular frames of cast iron plates and is finally cut by means of wires, into bars and slabs.

Soft soaps are made from various oils, such as whale, seal, rape, cotton-seed, and poppy, and from tallow and rosin. They are boiled with caustic potash lyes until they present a streaky appearance, after which the product is clarified by the addition of stronger lyes until it becomes a transparent slime.

The boiling is then continued until a great quantity of the water has been evaporated, constant stirring being meanwhile maintained, and when the consistency of very thick paste has been attained, it is allowed to cool and is packed in casks or drums, ready for use.

The resin used as a cheapener of household and laundry soaps is obtained in considerable quantities as a residue in the distillation of turpentine.

It is purified and decolorised by distillation in a current of steam, and when passed through either of the processes above described, may be made into either a hard or a soft soap, differing but slightly from that made from fat.

CARRYING BULLETS.—"It is surprising what a difference there is in individuals in the bearing of wounds," says A. Forbes, the famous war correspondent. "I have seen a man need to be held by eight persons while a whitlow was being lanced. I have seen another smoke his pipe while his leg was being cut off. Of course it is easier to bear the pain of an amputation when you are already suffering intense agony than if the operation were inflicted upon a perfectly sound limb. When a man is struck by a bullet he seldom feels any pain. He feels the blow as if someone had struck him with a fist, but it is not for an hour or two that the wound begins to smart.

Scientific and Useful.

VINEGAR AND FISH.—Vinegar is better than ice for keeping fish. By putting a little vinegar on the fish it will keep perfectly well even in hot weather. Fish is often improved in flavor under this treatment.

NOSE-BLEED.—The best way of checking the bleeding from the nose is to apply cold water to the neck and face. Hold a sponge saturated with cold water to the nostrils, or if this should not succeed, dissolve a little alum in a basin of water, and inject or sniff this up the nostrils. Hold the head back and do not attempt to blow the nose.

SOUND TIMBER.—The soundness of timber may be ascertained by placing the ear close to one end while another person delivers a succession of smart blows with a hammer or mallet upon the opposite end, when a continuance of the vibrations will indicate to an experienced ear even the degree of soundness. If only a dull thud meets the ear, the listener may be certain that unsoundness exists.

METAL NECKTIES.—Scarfs and necktie of metal are a new German invention. Gold, platinum and silver strips are welded, after the mosaic style, upon a metal ground, prepared by the incandescent process, then compressed by means of powerful presses, and finally elongated by rolling into long sheets or strips. The colors are yellow, red, green, white, gray and black, and the scarfs, being indestructible, are considered of practical value.

FROM WASTE.—We are always glad to note anything new in the way of utilising waste products, for such saving represents a distinct gain to the country. The last item of this kind that has been recorded is a method, which has been patented, of making use of spent dye liquors for the manufacture of writing-ink. The spent liquor of bichromate of potash, or soda, such as may have been used for mordanting wool, &c., is boiled with the waste logwood liquor from dyeing-vats. The result, after certain additions have been made, is a noncorrosive and permanent ink.

FOR PAVING.—The new paving material, "grano-metallic stone," is said to be composed of blast-furnace slag and granite, which are crushed, chemically treated and mixed with Portland cement. These ingredients are brought to a pasty consistency with an alkaline solution when laid. It possesses the quality of always being rough, thus affording a firm foothold for horses. It has been successfully subjected to tests which both natural and artificial stones have been unable to withstand. It is, moreover, highly refractory, and in thus useful as a lining for kilns, and especially valuable in the construction of fire-proof buildings.

Farm and Garden.

MULES.—Good mules are always in demand, and as they are more easily raised than horses it would probably pay to make a specialty of them on large farms where pasture is abundant.

BUTTER.—No dealer should handle a pound of butter until he first secures a room to keep it separate from all other goods having any unpleasant odor. A cheap, up-ground, artificial cellar is best, where the air is pure and well ventilated, but can be kept cool.

TAR.—Tar is one of the most useful articles to be kept about a stable. Internally use a teaspoonful night and morning for chronic coughs; externally it is particularly useful in thrush and all diseases or wounds of the feet. Mixed with fish-oil, it is one of the best remedies for hard and brittle feet.

LIME AND MANURE.—Mixing lime with any kind of manure will cause decomposition quickly, but at the loss of the volatile matter. It will not be beneficial to use lime with manure, except when about to apply the manure to the land, for then the soil, which is usually damp, will arrest the escape of ammonia, especially if the manure be harrowed in or well incorporated with the soil.

SHEEP.—Sheep as a rule, are not given a variety of food. The dry "pickings" are reserved for sheep because they do not refuse many kinds of food that are rejected by others animals; but to get sheep in prime condition they should receive careful feeding, which does not depend so much upon the quantity as upon the quality of the food allowed.

POULTRY.—A cheap and convenient disinfectant for poultry-houses may be prepared by mixing one bushel of finely sifted dirt and one pound of chloride of lime. If fine tobacco dust be added it will assist in preventing lice. The dirt so prepared may be dusted over the floors or in any portion of the poultry-house, and it will greatly assist in keeping off disease and vermin. The cost is but a trifle.

TOMATOES FROM CUTTINGS.—English gardeners who have to grow Tomatoes under glass to meet the increasing partiality for them at the dinner tables, take off the flowering shoots and root them, as we do sometimes with Chrysanthemum shoots, in order to have the flowers without the large roots and long stems of the Tomato plant. These Tomato cuttings yield much fruit in little space, and it ripens more freely because of being near to glass. They are kept over winter in good light, and at a temperature of about 50°.

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Sitting In Judgment.

It behooves us always to bear in mind, that while actions are always to be judged by the immutable standard of right and wrong, the judgments which we pass upon men must be qualified by considerations of age, country, station and other accidental circumstances; and it will then be found that he who is most charitable in his judgment is generally the least unjust.

Therefore in forming a judgment, lay your hearts void of fore-taken opinions; else whatsoever is done or said will be measured by a wrong rule; like them who have the jaundice, to whom everything appears yellow.

Without the proper and sober estimate of men, we have neither prudence in the affairs of life nor toleration for contrary opinions; we tempt the cheater and then condemn him; we believe so strongly in one faith that we would sentence dissentients as heretics. It is experience alone that teaches us that he who is discreet is seldom betrayed, and that out of the opinions we condemn, spring often the actions we admire.

The judgment, indeed, may be compared to a clock or watch, where the most ordinary machine is sufficient to tell the hours; but the most elaborate alone can point out the minutes and seconds, and distinguish the smallest differences of time.

As the touchstone which tries gold, but is not itself tried by the gold, such is he who has the standard of judgment. Hear one side, and you will be in the dark; hear both sides, and all will be clear.

Men are not to be judged by their looks, habits and appearances; but by the character of their lives and conversations, and by their works, meanwhile remembering that the judgment is like a pair of scales, and evidences like the weights. The will holds the balances in its hand, but even a slight jerk will be sufficient in many cases to make the lighter scale appear the heavier.

Too often the world is undone by looking at things at a distance. Every one complains of the badness of his memory, but nobody of his judgment; for we do not judge men by what they are in themselves, but by what they are relatively to us.

The wise will determine from the gravity of the case; the irritable, from sensibility to oppression; the high-minded from disdain and indignation. From this fact the vulgar mind fancies that judgment is implied chiefly in the capacity to censure; yet there is no judgment so exquisite as that which knows properly how to approve.

It is a maxim received in life that in general we can determine more wisely for others than for ourselves. The reason of it is so clear in argument that it hardly wants the confirmation of experience. Still, should it be sought for it is this: In our judgment of human transactions the law of optics is reversed; we see the most indistinctly the objects which are close around us.

In the exercise of judgment it is common to overlook what is near by, keeping the eye fixed on something remote. In the same manner present opportunities are neglected and attainable good is slighted by minds busied in extensive ranges and intent upon future advantages. Life, however short, is made shorter by waste of time; and its progress towards happiness, though naturally slow, is made still slower, and oftentimes more painful by the wrong or improper use of the gift of judgment.

That there is selfishness and meanness enough in the souls of one part of the world to hurt the credit of the other part of it is what I shall not dispute against; but to judge of the whole from this bad sample, and because one man is artful and plotting in his nature, or a second openly makes his pleasure or his profit the whole centre of all his designs, or because a third straight-hearted wretch sits confined within himself, feels no misfortunes but those which touch himself—to involve the whole race without mercy under such detested characters, is a conclusion as false as it is pernicious; and was it in general to gain credit could serve no end but the rooting out of our nature all that is generous, and planting in the stead of it such an aversion to each other as must untie the bands of society, and rob us of one of the greatest pleasures of it, the mutual communications of kind offices; and by poisoning the fountain, rendering everything suspected that flows through it.

It is much easier in some cases than in others to produce what looks like patience. There is a constitutional impatience which is the natural result of the delicate, nervous system, and the quick, active brain which always accompany high talent and cultivation. Some people, again, seem naturally patient. They are not easily fluttered and excited. They are phlegmatic and comatose, the result mainly of a dull brain and slow circulation. Extremely stupid people often seem remarkably patient. The truth is, the more patient men seem, the less patient they often are. That quietude of manner, which is the outward sign of patience in one striving against anger, may be the outward sign of mere stolidity in another. It is not patience to be composed under what another would feel keenly, if the reason is that you do not feel it at all.

A young man's fortune is not to be found in inherited wealth or social position. Gracious manners or business habits are a good thing to cultivate, but are not all. Will-power is the young man's fortune. It is the essence of the man. A young man with only a little will-power is a foregone failure. It should be cultivated. Genius is a gift of God and should not cause pride; but an honest pursuit of duties is an exhibition of will-power, and is something to be proud of. Well-directed educated will-power is what a young man needs.

Unless a man is fearful he cannot be courageous. Unless he realizes danger, and is on the watch against it, he lacks the elements of a soldierly character. A child might be fearless on a picket-line in time of war, but his fearlessness would not be courageousness, nor yet a substitute for it. True courage lies in the intelligent recognition of danger and in the determined facing of the danger recognized. Virtue is more than innocence. Innocence may be fearless; virtue must be courageous.

The laborer who wears out all his powers in the machinery of life's work, and takes no part in its thought and imagination, and the thinker who wears out his brain before its time, and has no part in the practical activity of life, have each lost much of the pleasure that rightly belong to them. They may not be conscious of it, but it is none the less true, that the health, happiness and real effectiveness of every man can be gained only by the harmonious union of labor and thought.

The best of men appear sometimes to be strange compounds of contradictory qualities; and were the accidental oversights and follies of the wisest man, the failings and imperfections of a religious man, the hasty acts and passionate words of a meek man, were they to rise up in judgment against them, and an ill-natured judge be suffered to mark in this manner what has been done amiss, what character would be so unexceptionable as to be able to stand before him?

There is scarce any lot so low but there is something in it to satisfy the man whom it has befallen; providence having so ordered things that in every man's cup, how bitter soever, there are some cordial drops—some good circumstances, which, if wisely extracted, are sufficient for the purpose he wants them—that is, to make him contented and, if not happy, at least resigned.

For want of self-restraint many men are engaged all their lives in fighting with difficulties of their own making, and rendering success impossible by their own cross-grained ungentleness; whilst others, it may be much less gifted, make their way easily and steadily, and achieve success by simple patience, equanimity and self-control.

Joy wholly from without is false, precarious and short. From without it may be gathered; but, like gathered flowers, though fair and sweet for a season, it must soon wither and become offensive. Joy from within is like smelling the rose on the tree; it is more sweet and fair, it is lasting; and, I must add, immortal.

What soothes suffering, what sanctifies labor, what makes a man good, strong, wise, patient, benevolent, just, and at the same time humble and great, worthy of liberty, is to have before him the perpetual vision of a better world casting its rays through the darkness of this life.

Does this soul within me, this spirit of thought and love and infinite desire, dissolve as well as the body? Has Nature, who quenches our bodily thirst, who rests our weariness, and perpetually encourages us to endeavor onwards, prepared no food for this appetite of immortality?

Worry retards rather than forwards work. It tries the mind before the work is begun. It makes one fretful, sours the temper, and disturbs the peace of the household. One who worries is never free from care. There are certain evils which cannot be overcome. We should make the best of them, and not add the burden of worry.

There are joys which long to be ours. God sends ten thousand truths, which come about us like birds seeking inlet; but we are shut up to them, and so they bring us nothing, but sit and sing awhile upon the roof and then fly away.

He that had never seen a river, imagined the first he met with to be the sea, and the greatest things that have fallen within our knowledge we conclude the extremes that nature makes of the kind.

The unremitting retention of simple and high sentiments in obscure duties is hardening the character to that temper which will work with honor, if need be, in the tumult or on the scaffold.

There are no principles but those of religion to be depended on in cases of real distress, and that these are able to encounter the worst emergencies, and to bear up under all the changes and chances to which life is subject.

Five great enemies to peace inhabit with us, viz., avarice, ambition, envy, anger, pride. If those enemies were to be banished, we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace.

How difficult you will find it to convince a miserly heart that any thing is good which is not profitable! or a libertine one that anything is bad which is pleasant.

An inward sincerity will of course influence the outward deportment; but where the one is wanting, there is great reason to suspect the absence of the other.

The World's Happenings.

A dash of tomato catsup makes cod liver oil tastier.

Hamm & Morbocuf keep a restaurant in Victoria, B. C.

A bomb in the shape of a book is a Nihilistic device of devilry.

Hot bricks for the passengers is the latest car-heating suggestion.

An Iowan beset by footpads "sustained two pistol shots in his hat."

The Sunday-schools of Brooklyn are to have a great parade on May 25.

A Stockton, Cal., bootblack carries a box that is covered with silver plate.

A millionaire who still works is a professional butter-taster in New York.

A convict smuggled $17 into Sing Sing by holding the cash in his mouth.

A temple and hospital for the benefit of the Chinese residents is to be opened in New York.

It is calculated that there are 4,570,000 more women than men in Europe at the present time.

A certain fashion agitator is trying to get the New York ladies to substitute pantaloons for petticoats.

Ulysses is the only town in Grant county, Kansas, and Horace and Tribune are the only towns in Greeley county.

A big black bear seated on a cake of ice sniffed at the town of Bismarck, D. T., as he swept swiftly by the other day bound for the Gulf of Mexico.

An Oregon man, who pointed a gun at a woman, "in fun," and killed her, last month at Albion, in that State, has been convicted of manslaughter.

A yacht race, to be sailed in June over a course extending twenty miles to windward outside Sandy Hook, is to be for the novel stakes of a pint pot full of gold dollars.

A West Chester physician tells a paper of that place that he has patients who will relish broth made from the English sparrow after they have refused to take all other nourishment.

A ghost which recently frightened people in Nyack, N. Y., was knocked down by a stone in the hands of a skeptic the other night, and thereupon promised to give up the spook business.

For 24 hours unceasingly, and with no other refreshment than some beef tea and an occasional cigar, a Cape Colony artist, named Woodcock, played the piano at Raberton recently, "finishing in capital condition."

An old remedy for cancer has been resorted to with success in Augusta, Georgia. It consists of the application of a common sea crab. The remedy was in use in Germany half a century ago, but has long been abandoned.

A visitor to the penitentiary at Zanesville, Ohio, while casually looking through the institution recently discovered in one of the prisoners a brother of his who had run away from home at the age of seven years, and was supposed by the family to have been drowned.

A young man at San Rafael, Cal., who heard some one in his room on a recent night, called to the intruder to explain the cause of his visit or he would shoot. Receiving no reply, he fired a ball from his revolver and wounded his deaf and dumb aunt, but not seriously.

In a swallow's nest that he examined, Joseph O'Brien, of Cleveland, says were two young birds. Around the leg of one of them horsehair had been closely wound. Mr. O'Brien removed the hair and found that the leg had been broken. He thinks it was a genuine case of bird surgery.

A paralytic, a woman who had been unable to walk for years, attended last week, at Kokomo, Ind., a revival meeting, at which the congregation joined in prayer for her. To the surprise of those who knew her, it is stated, she arose and walked about, and has since been pronounced as cured.

Mary Howell, a young lady of Newark, N. J., who received what was regarded as fatal injuries as far back as February 21st, while dancing in that city, died on Wednesday. She remained in a paralyzed condition, physically, from the time of the accident, but with a clear mind the greater part of the time.

A Missouri farmer, driving home at night from St. Louis, dropped a coat and a bag of oats from his wagon without knowing it. His dog knew it, though, and lying down by them watched them for three days, despite all efforts to coax or drive him away. At the end of that time the farmer came back.

A Grass Valley newspaper is responsible for the statement that rats in some Idaho mines became so hungry during a recent shut-down of nearly a month that they managed to unscrew the oil cans used about the machine drills, and satisfied their hunger by sticking their tails into the oil and then sucking them.

A Western bigamist was reclaimed by his wife on the day he left the State Prison recently. She had obtained a divorce from him when he ran away with her rival, but on the last day of his penitentiary term she appeared, ready to forgive and remarry him. The prison chaplain married them in the visitors' parlor.

Fox hunters near Camargo, Ill., recently chased a fox so closely that he took refuge in a hole in a haystack. A terrier was sent into the hole, and he succeeded in seizing the fox by a hind leg. One of the hunters then managed to grab the terrier by a hind leg, and so he pulled the terrier and the terrier pulled the fox out.

One of the newest and best circuses to be seen in Paris has just brought out an odd production—a Spanish fair with all its adjuncts, its beggars, its mandolinists, its peasants and merchants in costume, its audiences and songs, and, to crown all, its bull fight. This is one of the most amusing and picturesque spectacles that has been seen in Paris for many years.

MY FORECAST.

BY C. F. J.

At twenty-three
I planned my scheme of life. I'd be
A merchant, toward whose waiting pier
Globe-circling ships should homeward steer
From Orient and Occident.
When millions had been won, I meant
To choose a wife of gentle race,
Cultured in mind and fair in face;
Build me a palace, with each part
By art designed, enriched by art;
And, finally, to have one son,
Handsome and tall, but only one.
Thus I forecast my destiny
At twenty-three.

At forty-three,
How have I prospered? Let me see.
I find myself a simple clerk,
With light reward and heavy work;
Yet hoping for advance in rank,
I owe no man, and have in bank
A trifle saved. I occupy
Some fourth-floor rooms, which Kate and I
Think charming. (Kate's my wife, you know;
A pretty seamstress long ago.)
We have six girls; perhaps too many,
But not for worlds we'd part with any.
So kind has fortune been to me
At forty-three!

Six Sisters.

BY ALLISON BUTLER.

"JUDITH MAYNARD is going to be married!" says Una, our eldest sister, coming into the schoolroom with a solemn face—a face that has reproach, lamentation, warning, and menace written on it.

"Judith Maynard?" we five cry in amazement. "Why, she is thirty if she is a day!"

"That has nothing to do with it," says Una, sitting down upon a broken-backed chair. "Laura will go next, you may reckon as certain."

"Laura!" we all laugh derisively in the pride of our youth, for our ages begin at sixteen and do not mount higher than twenty-two, though there are six of us—but then Mona and Naomi are twins. Laura Maynard is thirty-two, and was our mother's bridesmaid.

"Yes," says Una, resigned to the inevitable, "Hildred broke the charm last year. They were being called the 'three old maids of Cree,' as you remember; and all at once—we hardly knew it was coming till it was nearly over—she was gone. Now both the others follow. Girls, I know that, if only one of us could go off, all the rest would follow."

"No, no," sighs lovely Naomi, shaking her head; "the charm would not work. There are six of us, and where could a sufficiency of men be found in Cree?"

"Not one of us will ever be taken," groans Eulalie. "What man would dare to marry into a family of six girls?"

"Una dear, I will marry the first man that asks me," says little Vera generously.

"I should think you would!" observes Mona sharply.

"Could we not all set off in different directions, and let people think we are only daughters?" suggests Eulalie. "We might show to better advantage apart."

"No," says Una impatiently. "How could we keep ourselves in food and raiment apart? It is difficult enough to do it living all together, as you know. No; there is one remedy only. I have considered the matter carefully—one of us must break the spell. The question is, who will do it?"

"I will!" It sounds like one voice, so perfect is the unison; but five loud young voices speak simultaneously, so generous are we all in our wish to sacrifice ourselves for the common weal.

"You cannot all do it—at least you need not," says Una. "We must draw lots. Mona give me that sheet of paper. Now"—tearing it and folding it into six neat strips, which she cuts into different lengths—"the one who gets the longest is to be the victim. But first we must all swear to do what I have settled must be done—no drawing back, girls!"

"We swear!" we all cry, eager, but quite solemn.

"Then draw!"

She holds out the bag into which she has put the lots, and we draw.

"Oh, it isn't me!" cries Naomi joyously; and we regard her scornfully as one who has been craven at heart all through.

"Mine is very long," says Eulalie dolefully.

But it is I who am the Jonah. The lot falls upon me.

"Well, I am sure I shall be very happy," I say. "If you will kindly provide the other party to the undertaking, I shall not draw back. I really don't care much what he is like—I am not so particular as the man who sang 'My Queen.' I should not like him to be a butcher—one has one's antipathies—but I will swallow even a butcher for the public good; a marriageable butcher however will be about as hard to find in Cree as a soldier or a sailor, either of which I should really prefer if I were free to exercise choice in the matter."

"Oh, it may be a general decorated with orders, if you like!" says Una. "It rests entirely with yourself."

We wait open-mouthed to hear our oracle. What is the brilliant scheme to be evolved out of that busy brain of hers, which has transformed many an old worn gown into almost a new one, and many a scanty supply of meat and vegetables into a nice dinner when our father has brought an unexpected guest to the Rectory?

"Girls, you agree with me that, if we wait till an eligible offer comes to one of us—or an ineligible one either for that matter—we may wait till the crack of doom?"

"We may!" we answer, again in dismal unison.

"You agree with me that, if one of us marries, the spell will be broken and we shall all follow suit?"

A less decided answer; there are so many of us, and the Census returns prove such terrible facts as to the hopeless preponderance of our sex!

"This is leap year!"

My sisters start with surprise. I do not, for my heart sinks and my blood seems to congeal.

"Freda must propose to her husband."

There is silence for a moment. I dare not protest; I am pledged. Then Vera speaks.

"Supposing he should refuse her?"

"I don't think he will," says Una calmly. "Men don't like saying 'No' to ladies. We can help her, you know; we will stand by her. Don't be afraid, Freda."

"I am not afraid," I declare stoutly, my confidence beginning to return. I really cannot think of a man of our acquaintance to whom I could propose.

They are all married except the butcher and a few more of his kind, and I am sure Una will give me time before she insists on my proposing to him; and, time granted who knows what may happen? Somebody may propose to me.

"How ought it to be done," asks Vera—"by writing or in person; and, if in person, must she go down on her knees?"

"Writing would be the easiest," says Naomi, who is always kind and considerate.

"It must be done in the way most likely to succeed, and not the easiest," puts in Una quite sternly. "She must not think of what is easy and pleasant when the future of all of us is at stake. If she wrote, he would think it a hoax, and not answer the letter."

"You won't mind if he throws it at you after you are married, dear, will you?" asks Naomi.

I say nothing; but I am terribly sure that I shall mind very much. Una answers for me.

"She must be content to run the risk of everything. You have read in this very room many and many a time of Marcus Curtius. When he leaped into the gulf in the Forum, do you think he waited to think of trivial things? He thought only of the good of his people."

"And Van Artevelde, who threw himself upon the Austrian spears!" cries Vera enthusiastically.

"And Decius—what was it that he did?" puts in Eulalie. "The Queen proposed to the Prince Consort, Freda; you are not a solitary example."

"And we shall be very solitary examples if you blench," says Mona, making her little joke very dismally.

"When you are married, we shall all come and stay with you," puts in Vera cheerfully and consolingly.

"I cannot have you all at once," I say decidedly, for I really feel as if matters were being settled, and that it is as well not to raise undue hopes amongst my sisters. "Of course I shall have Una first, and the others in turn."

"It is well that Eulalie's turn won't come till your furniture is a good deal worn," observes Mona, looking at our tom-boy, who is balancing herself on a three-legged chair, and who has made at least a third of the blots upon the desks and tables, and at least half the scratches on the rest of our much-battered furniture.

"I rather wish we had married Eulalie first," remarked Una. "She is the most expensive member of the family."

"By-the-bye," says Naomi suddenly. "Freda must find some one to propose to. Who must it be?"

We have been chattering at a rate that would put a flock of magpies to shame but now silence falls upon us for a moment.

"It is tiresome that it takes two to make the bargain," says Mona impatiently.

"She must not waste time upon a person utterly impracticable," observes Una thoughtfully—"not impracticable because of any faults she may find in him, but because he may be likely to see insuperable faults in her," she adds quickly.

"There are so few men here," says Mona "and they all have wives."

"I do not admire the Turkeys as a nation," puts in Eulalie—"their dress is so ridiculous; but there are certainly compensating advantages in their marriage-laws."

"Mrs. Forbes was not so well yesterday," I put in. "Perhaps I had better wait till Mr. Forbes is at liberty."

"Mrs. Forbes may live twenty years or more," says Una snappishly. "She has been 'not so well' for the last ten years. I don't believe there is anything the matter with her. No, Freda, it must be done in leap-year—that is positive—or it won't succeed."

"Una," I cry, dismayed "you never said a word about leap-year!"—for it is the twenty-fourth of December, and really such hurry takes one's breath away. "Then I must wait till next leap-year," I add cheerfully; "and by that time Mrs. Forbes may be dead."

"Freda," says Una indignantly, "do you think that at my time of life I can wait four years? I can tell you that I am almost positive I found a gray hair sticking to my gown this morning."

"Daddy's or Nell's" says Vera; but four of us look grave, and Naomi touches the corners of her beautiful eyes with tender anxious fingers to feel if crow's-feet are tracing themselves on the soft fairness of her skin, while Mona looking at herself in the glass of the clock-face, tries to see if her peachy blossom has faded.

"No, no, Freda," says Una; "there is no time to lose. The deed must be accomplished before the year is out."

On second thought, I consider this so much the better, though I dare not say so aloud. A rapid mental survey of possibilities shows me that, though I may be

"As willing as willing can be,"

the chances are dead against my having the opportunity. The chief peculiarity of our parish of Cree seems to be that boys are hardly ever born in it.

The Doctor certainly has four little boys; but, as the eldest is only seven, he is unable to contract a marriage engagement. Sir Charles Treherne's sons are both abroad—one with his regiment, the other with his ship.

Mrs. Dalton, president of our Clothing Club, has a son in London, but he is married. All the other men in our parish are married, and there is not even a boy of fourteen within visiting radius. So a happy sense of security comes over me.

If Una means me to be engaged before the new year, it will have to be by such a miracle as favored Pygmalion; the statue of old Lord Cree on the top of the hill or the battered old stone Crusader in the church must become animate—there is nothing else for it.

"Please, Miss Middleton, Henderson of Three Trees has sent to say they haven't an egg left, and they cannot get you one for love or money," says the cook, entering.

Here is a calamity! The Christmas-pudding must be mixed to-night, and how can a Christmas-pudding be made without eggs?

"Goldston will have some," suggests Mona.

Goldston is the station-master, who has a taste for keeping poultry. Una thinks we might try Goldston; but she cannot go, as she and Mona must finish the flannel petticoats that are to be doled out to-morrow. I have sewn till my fingers are sore so I volunteer, tho' it is snowing hard, and none of the others will come with me—they are going to put the last wreaths up in the church.

Our little fox-terrier wakes from her slumber on the hearth-rug and barks delightedly; she seems to know that I am talking of taking a walk, and that I cannot go without her.

The schoolroom looks pleasant and cosy as I turn to leave it and face the elements outside. It is a very shabby room. There is not a chair that it would be safe to sit upon if any of us were more than eight stone in weight, and the tables are all over blots and scratches, and the book shelves contain only the torn old volumes that have served us all for instruction and amusement for several years; but the firelight and the fading daylight reveal none of these defects—or rather they make the defects look like charms, so associated are all these shabby books and things with our joyous youth.

What the uncertain light shows most distinctly are the five happy young faces of my sisters as they sit over their scarlet flannel and gleaming evergreens. Yes, I should grieve to leave them all, even if I went by a triumphant bridal path.

It is getting rather dark, and the snow is whirling in the wind quite blindingly; but the station is not far off, and I know every inch of the road. As I reach it, a train comes puffing up, its powerful lights glowing out of the darkness.

I have to wait until it has gone, as the station-master's attention is engaged by ticket-taking. I have some trouble to keep Nell at my side—she is so restless, and seems bent on dashing under the train in search of rats; and then the driving snow fills the air so that I cannot see distinctly. Somebody gets out of a carriage, but whether man or woman I do not notice; I am only aware of the fact by the carriage door being left open, for at that moment little Nell succeeds in wriggling out of my arms, and, to my vexation, dashes into the open car carriage, in which a little white dog is being held back by a leash.

The whistle sounds. In the darkness and confusion none of the few officials are at hand to shut the door and hand out Nell, so, without thinking, I jump into the carriage after her, and, to my horror, the train moves on.

I look round in dismay; there is no one in the carriage but the owner of the little white coated dog, a young man in a thick ulster, who seems to be very much amused at my dismay.

"What shall I do?" I say in despair, never reflecting for a moment that I ought not to speak to a strange young man in a train.

"Is anything the matter?" he asks, so kindly that I look at him with some interest, and see that he is very handsome. "Have you left your luggage?"

"Oh, no!" I answer, "I was not coming by this train at all; I haven't a ticket. The dog jumped in, and I jumped in to get her out."

"Well, you can get out at the next station and go back," he says. "You can pay at the other end."

A good idea! But the next station is six miles off, and I shall have to pay for first-class return tickets for myself and Nell, and I never have money enough for such accidents. Many and many a mile have we all trudged to save a threepenny third-class train-fare—money is so scarce at Cree Rectory.

"It is getting so dark," I say dolefully. "It will be such a long time before I get home, they will think I have been murdered; and there is—there are other things," I correct myself hastily. I cannot explain to this youth that our Christmas-pudding depends on my getting those eggs.

"We can easily find out when you can go back," he says cheerfully, taking up his Bradshaw. "Let me see—Cree, Hesterley, Framley, Drothcourt." He looks up a little uneasily. "I am afraid there will not be another train from Hesterley to Cree to-night," he says, "but there are sure to be plenty of other conveyances."

My eyes fill with tears. Even supposing I can get back somehow from Hesterley, at what time shall I reach the Rectory? Perhaps I shall have to stay alone, snowed up at this lonely place over Christmas Day, for on our branch-line no trains run on Sunday, and Christmas Day is reckoned as a Sunday.

How he will despise me! What a baby he will think me! He has turned away his head and is stroking his detestable fox-terrier that has brought me into this plight.

"Do you know any one at Hesterley?" he asks.

"No," I reply, in a tone that is meant to be dignified, but which is only sullen.

"Don't be afraid," he says, turning his face to me—he has most lovely eyes, so kind and tender, and they are full of concern for me. "I have to get out at Hesterley, and I will see that you get back safely—it will be all right. It is not really late, you know, though it is so dark. It is only a quarter of five."

We get out at Hesterley. There is an inn quite close to the station, and we walk thither at once.

"I am afraid you are very cold," he says His voice is so genuinely kind that I cry again; I really am very cold now. "You must have a cup of tea to warm you before setting off again."

"No, thank you," I respond hurriedly. I have only sixpence in my pocket, given to me by Una to pay for the eggs, and there will be the drive home. "What did they say about my ticket?" I ask, having forgotten all about it while he was busy getting his luggage.

"Oh, it was all right!" he answers, so I

conclude that he has explained the accident, and that Nell and I are not to be charged for the whole distance from the terminus at the county town. "You must have some tea, and so must I," he adds, coming to me in the inn parlor, having been making inquiries about carriages.

"I cannot keep you here," I say, but weakly, for I am very cold and hungry, and the idea of tea is very tempting. "I have no money with me—only sixpence," I tell him—and I blush, so that I am warmer than tea can make me—"but, if you will kindly let me send you——" I stop abruptly—I feel so confused.

"Of course you shall pay me," he says, with the tact of a perfect gentleman. "I find that they charge eighteen pence for tea; you can give me an I. O. U."

He looks quite eagerly at me as he says the last words. It surprises me. I feel for a moment as if he doubted my honor and were greedy for his money; but he smiles so very pleasantly as he finds me a pen and ink and a blank sheet of paper that I see he looks upon it as a joke, which is a great relief to me, though of course we are both quite in earnest about the debt. I write—

"I. O. U. one-and-six-pence.—Freda Middleton, December 24th, 1880."

"That is quite right," he says, folding it up and putting it carefully into his pocket-book. "You live at Cree, I think you said?"

"Yes—at the Rectory," I answer frankly. "You have not told me your address?"—I add this after a pause. How can I send him the money if he does not tell me his name?

"Oscar Sargent, Junior Carlton Club," he says. "I am here only for a short holiday."

We do not linger over our tea—I have my journey home weighing far too heavily on my mind for any such dallying; but a pang of regret smites my heart when the vehicle is announced that has to bear me to the bosom of my family.

Oh, how dark and cold and wild the night looks, and how bright and cosy the inn parlor, and how kind and handsome my deliverer, whom I shall never see again!

To my amazement after putting Nell and me carefully into the gig, and wrapping me in rugs that I do not notice for the moment to be much handsomer than any likely to be furnished by the Hesterley hostelry, he jumps in beside me.

"Are you coming too?" I ask my heart beating fast with joy, and a feeling of relief coming to me at the thought that I shall not have to face those six stormy miles alone.

"Of course," he replies. "You don't think I can allow you to go alone with that half-tipsy driver? I have engaged the trap for myself—I am going on after dropping you at Cree."

What a wonderful drive it is through the dark night and the driving snow—what a sudden gleam of romance, breaking upon the quiet gray monotony of my life, to be carried through the darkness by this beautiful young knight, like a princess in a fairy-tale!

It comes to an end only too soon; it seems to me that we have flown over the distance, though I suppose that, with a snowstorm in our teeth and a broken-kneed, broken-winded horse, we have almost crawled. We come to the Rectory gate and here I am deposited.

Not until my home comes within sight do I remember the frightful compact to which I am bound. What would my sisters say if they knew—if they found us out? What would they insist upon?

"Please don't take me any farther," I say hurriedly, but most earnestly, as the driver prepares to get down to open the gate. "I would rather not. Good-night. Thank you very much for your kindness."

I cannot see in the darkness whether he is disappointed or not that I do not ask him to come in to be thanked. He sees I am in earnest, and he lifts me down carefully, and then says—

"Good night, Miss Middleton; and I wish you a very happy Christmas. I shall never forget this pleasant Christmas Eve."

Even in the dark I can see his eyes looking at me like stars, bright and tender. He holds my hand in his for a few moments, and then vanishes into the gloom out of which he had appeared.

With a sigh I walk up to the house, resolved that the wonderful events of the past two hours shall be a secret locked in my bosom for evermore. Not for all the world would I have the girls know!

As I walk up the garden path I am surprised by the unwonted illumination of the windows. In our rigorously economical household no lights are allowed beyond what are absolutely necessary.

In front I should not see more than three lighted rooms, counting the hall, the schoolroom, and my father's study. To-night there is quite a blaze, for the bay-window over the drawing-room is lighted, the drawroom itself—most marvellous of all—the dining-room, school-room and hall.

I open the hall door—no locks, bolts, and bars are there to fly asunder; there is a deep stillness, but a blaze of light. I hurry at once to the schoolroom. There they are, all five, and they start to their feet to receive me with an eagerness that surprises me.

"Where in the world have you been Freda? What do you think has happened while you were away? A visitor has come—dropped from the skies for you to marry!"

"So handsome, so distinguished!" they repeat over and over in a chorus. "Your fate!"

I am too much bewildered to interrupt them, but at last there is a lull, of which I take advantage for the moment. I wonder if it can be Oscar Sargent, come into the house by some unknown means while I have been coming up the garden and the stars.

"It is Colonel Brocklehurst," explains Una—"quite an old friend of papa's. He has been traveling, and, finding himself in England on Christmas eve, he came straight here to see if he could give him a Christmas welcome. It is most fortunate for you!"

"He is very nice, Freda," says Naomi encouragingly.

"But, if he is a colonel and a friend of papa's, he must be very old," I demur.

"Not at all," rejoins Una—"he is just a nice age."

"Young men are so fickle and so dissipated!" says Naomi sagely.

"'Better be an old man's darling than a young man's slave,'" Eulalie observes.

"Perhaps he has a wife," I suggest.

"No, he has not; we asked him," says Vera triumphantly. "You don't think we could have forgotten such an important matter, do you?"

"You asked him?" I question, scarlet with horror.

"Not directly," says Naomi. "He said it would be such a pleasure to spend Christmas amongst our happy young faces, and Vere said 'Have you no children?' Of course it was a risky question, as they might all have died, and he might have cried or fainted at being reminded of them; but he only laughed and said that he had no children—that he was a crusty old bachelor—and really we could hardly restrain our feelings as we heard it."

"He is going to help us to finish the church to-night," says Mona. "He hindered us by coming, so he offered to make up for it by helping. He came just after you went out. Where were you?" she asks, suddenly reminded again of my absence.

It is quite easy to tell my story as I choose to tell it, for they are all quite absorbed by the arrival of Colonel Brocklehurst, and can hardly give me the barest attention, much less subject me to cross-examination or be hypercritical as to matters of detail.

"I got into the train after Nell, who jumped into a carriage—it must have been the very train he came by—and it went on; and I had to get out at the next station and come back. I haven't got the eggs, Una!" I finish, all at once mindful of the omission.

"What shall we do?" she cries. "It is nearly eight o'clock. I must send Mary to Goldston's at once, and, if they have none, perhaps Mrs. Forbes can spare some."

"Where is he?" I ask, Una having gone to give orders in the kitchen.

"Having a pipe with papa in the dining-room," answers Naomi. "He would not have dinner, though it was offered to him; no doubt he guessed what there would be—a cold mutton-bone. He said he had dined in the middle of the day in London—but, Freda, I am afraid he is not so truthful as we could wish for your sake, for I don't believe men of his sort can dine early—so we all had tea together; but we could not put on our best gowns, because of having the holly to work up; and, as he found us in these, it did not matter. Our best attire will impress him all the more on Christmas Day."

"We wanted to keep Naomi up-stairs," says Eulalie, "because we were afraid that if he saw her first he would not think of you; but it could not be managed."

"But if he had promised to Naomi it would have been just the same," I say.

"We did not think of that," returns Vera.

"Here he is!" whispers Mona.

The door opens, and a very tall, very gray-haired gentleman enters, preceding our father, and looking quite twenty years older. But it is only the whiteness of his hair that denotes his age, he is very erect and soldierly, and really very handsome, bronzed as the hero of a hundred fights should be; and, though he may not have been so often in action, he has the scar of a real wound on his forehead which immediately makes me think of Sir Lancelot—

"However marred, of more than twice his years,
Seamed with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes,
And loved him with the love which was her doom."

"Ah," I sigh to myself, for I do not feel the slightest symptoms of love thrilling me—"of more than twice her years"! That was a very different matter. Colonel Brocklehurst must be quite seventy—nearly four times my age—and Sir Lancelot could not be more than forty at the outside; and even forty would be too dreadful. I wonder at Elaine's taste!"—and I think of a bright young face with kind eyes that seemed to touch my heart, and it fills my mind so completely that I have barely a thought to give Colonel Brocklehurst; and, as for marrying him, the idea seems really too poor a joke to be smiled at.

He is introduced, and he talks to me; but how can I attend to what he is saying while one half of my mind is so keenly alive to the intentness with which five pairs of eyes are watching me, five pairs of ears listening, and the other half is filled and borne down by the weight of my secret? I feel so guilty, as if I were cheating them all, and yet I cannot tell—I cannot! They would make me write an offer of marriage to the Junior Carlton Club.

And now we must go to the church. I am so very tired that I really long for bed, the only place where I can have peace and comparative solitude to think over my adventure; and there is nothing to do at the church that Eulalie and Vera could not do. But no such indulgence is allowed me.

"Naomi, I want you to stay and help me," says Una.

I hear the request with impatient contempt. I have never thought of being jealous of my beautiful sister; but I remember the eyes that looked at me with such friendly interest—in my modesty I call it no more even to myself—only a few hours ago, and I think that if I were good enough to be approved by them I am much too good for the eyes of seventy years. I cannot help thinking that the Colonel is disappointed that Naomi is not to come. How foolish Una is to keep her at home! I am sure he is ready to fall in love with Naomi, and, as she is fourteen months older than I am, she is really of a more suitable age. He is not the least bit taken with me—I can see that—and it will be utterly useless to practice any blandishments upon him, even if I had any.

"As you have your hat on ready, Freda, you had better go on to the church," says Una, when Mona, Vera, and Eulalie have gone to put on theirs.

I turn scarlet with shame at such barefaced scheming. I cannot go alone; the poor Colonel cannot but offer to accompany me. I would refuse but that he falls into the trap so readily, saying—

"Yes, let us go. I will take care of you, and you will show me the way. Ladies take such a long time to put on their hats, and the night is getting on."

I can hear Naomi whisper to Una—

"This looks promising."

In angry silence I take up a floral cross. Colonel Brocklehurst carries the wreathes, which are tied up in a table cloth, and we set off in the darkness.

"I cannot tell you what a treat it is to spend Christmas in England again," he says. "It was most kind of your father to make me welcome as he did. I landed only this morning, friendless and alone, and now I feel as if I had become one of a merry family circle."

"One of the family already," I think, amused at his unconsciousness of our plots against him.

"Have you no people of your own?" I ask.

"Only my grand-nephew," he answers. "I went to find him at once, and he was just setting off to spend Christmas with his mother's people, so I came here to see if you could take me in. Christmas alone in London would have been something too awful!"

"How odd to have so few relations!" I say. "There are so many of us I am afraid you will find us rather noisy."

"If I do, I shall like it all the better," he responds, smiling down so kindly at me that I begin to think he is really very nice and, though he is seventy, he might do for one of us—only not for me."

I wonder if he is at all smitten by Naomi. What a blessing it would be if he were! And she must like him, as she has been the loudest of all in her praises.

By this time we were at the church door. I pause, looking for the others along the white way; the snow has ceased to fall, and the starlight is clear in the frosty air.

"They are not coming," I say uneasily.

"Well, I dare say we can manage without them," he responds and we go inside.

We put up the few wreaths we have brought: we fix the cross in its place over the altar. Then we leave the church, and those perfidious girls have never turned up.

I cannot restrain my wrath when I find myself in the schoolroom again. Colonel Brocklehurst is with papa in the study, where to-morrow's sermon has just been completed.

"How could you do such a thing?" I cry, nearly in tears. "I will never speak to him again!"

"Freda, you must not show the white feather. We give you opportunities, and we leave it to your honor—I say nothing of your affection for us or of having an eye to our interests—to make the most of those opportunities," says Mona.

"What did he say? Did he show any symptoms of falling in love? What did you talk about?" they all ask at once.

"Nothing at all," I answer sulkily.

"Freda darling, don't desert us," pleads Naomi, putting her arm round me. "He is very nice; and you know you like the army; and it will be such a good thing for all of us. Now do be nice and pleasant. One would think we had asked you to marry a man like old Arthur Gride."

"He will introduce us to his brother officers," puts in Vera; "or you can take us to India with you, where there are no girls to marry, and every one who goes out has a dozen good offers as soon as she sets foot on the shore."

"That cannot be, for he left the army years and years ago," I say, proud of my superior knowledge. "He has been travelling in Africa."

"Oh; then he has been confidential!" says Eulalie.

"If he is fond of travelling, you will soon be rid of him," observes Vera. "He will get himself eaten up."

"You cruel little thing!" exclaims gentle Naomi.

"Well, anyway, he won't want a wife to travel in jungles with him," says Eulalie; "and when you are alone we will stay with you."

On Christmas Day we all go to church. I look out eagerly for Oscar Sargent's bright young face, for he may be staying in the parish or near it; but he is not present. Of course I am made to sit next to our guest so I am rather relieved that Oscar is not in the church. Somehow, though I cannot define the reason of the feeling, I should not like him to see me sitting next to Colonel Brocklehurst. I feel it must be written on all the girls' faces that they mean him to marry me.

The rest of the day is perfect martyrdom; they never let me alone.

"Put a screen behind his chair, Freda," whispers Mona—"I am sure he is sitting in a draught. Do be nice and attentive to him. Old—I mean elderly—people think so much of little creature-comforts."

"I wish he would smoke, and then you could fill his pipe for him," says Eulalie.

But all their labor is in vain. If he were aware of our intentions, he could not guard himself more carefully; he chaperons himself quite vigilantly by insisting on always having us all about him. We have games in the evening, our numbers being augmented by Mr. and Mrs. Forbes and their little girl and two old maids, Miss Jane and Miss Louise Porter; and the girls cast discretion to the winds by the way in which they fling me at Colonel Brocklehurst. They choose games that always require two persons to go out of the room, and, excepting occasionally, just to give a color of decency, they always send him with me.

They insist that we shall be partners at vingt-et-un, to Miss Louisa Porter's great vexation, for she is sitting on his other hand, and evidently expected that the honor would fall to her. To-morrow she and her sister will have set it ringing all over the parish how we are trying to catch Colonel Brocklehurst, who must be ninety if he is a day, though they remarked early in the evening that he did not look fifty, and they could not believe he was as old as papa.

When we meet in my room at night—the room I share with Vera and Eulalie—they all review the events of the day, and admit that so far things have not been so very satisfactory.

"He has not sought you out," remarks Una. "It is in no spirit of vanity but of sorrow that we admit it; but in this case that does not matter much, as it is you who have to seek him out. You must do better to-morrow. There will be no church, and nobody here in the evening to get in the way."

The morrow comes and I have a piece of business to transact on my own account—eighteen-pennyworth of stamps to purchase and send to the Junior Carlton Club; and I must write a note with them; and pondering how I am to find the necessary solitude and, above all, how I am to get the letter posted unseen, keeps me awake half the night.

There is positively no privacy at all in such a family as ours. It really would be an advantage to be married just for the sake of living less perpetually in public. A husband could not be with one always like five sisters.

At breakfast there are, owing to the festive season, an unusual number of letters—six for papa, four for Una, several for the rest of us, one for Colonel Brocklehurst.

We are so much occupied in looking at our letters and cards that we quite forget him for the moment. When I do look at him across the table, I meet his eyes fixed upon me with a curious but kindly scrutiny. It embarrasses me very much indeed; for, when people are conscious of being implicated in a dark conspiracy, they naturally shrink before the intent gaze of the intended victim, especially if he happens to possess a pair of keen gray eyes under shaggy gray brows, which look as if they were searching the inmost recesses of your guilty soul.

I feel the blood rushing over my face. I look down hastily into my coffee-cup. Mona kicks me under the table, which causes me to give vent to a choking hysterical giggle. Oh, what will he think?

"He is in love!" cries Eulalie the moment we are out of the dining-room. She has such a loud voice, he is almost certain to have heard her. "I seed him a-winkin' at her with his wicked old eye!" she says mischievously.

"He is in tortures of jealousy," remarks Vera. "He thought Aunt Julie's Christmas card was from a rival—she writes just like a man. Now to play your other cards."

"He only thinks us a set of ill-bred schoolgirls," I put in. "As if a man like him would fall in love or be jealous!"

"Capital, Freda! She already feels that he is a superior being—a most proper sentiment for a future wife," says Eulalie,

As she speaks he comes up behind us.

"What a merry party you are!" he says. "What are you going to do this frosty morning? Do you skate?"

Of course we do; but there is something I must do before I can conscientiously give myself up to pleasure—I must pay my debt of honor. Now, if they would all go to the pond over the field——

"I am afraid I cannot skate," our guest is saying. "Threescore years and ten, added to the want of practice—I have been for the last ten winters in India and Africa, you know—make one nervous of standing on knives; but I shall be proud to be of any service to you."

"I have a very bad chilblain on my heel," I begin tremulously, for I am quite sure my excuse will not be believed; they all know by experience that if my chilblain had been very bad they would have heard all about it before now.

"Then you and I must look on," says the Colonel, looking very kindly at me; and my sisters smile.

"It will be very dull work for you to come to the pond," Una says to the Colonel. Nobody could suspect her of any malice prepense just now, but I know she has turned the matter over in her mind, and decided that nothing can be gained by our skating and his looking. "Freda never cares for skating"—oh, what a story!—"and she must not lame herself. But, if you care to see the country, she will take you for a drive."

"I shall like that very much indeed," returns the Colonel, with amazing readiness.

It is rather like witchcraft that Una should make a plan so very convenient for me,

and that he should help it on with such goodwill. No doubt I astonish her as much as they astonish me by agreeing instantly; and presently they are all gone with their skates—Una, Naomi, Mona, Eulalie, and Vera—and he and I are left alone. My father does not count, as he is at the church marrying the clerk's daughter to the sexton's son—in that station of life marrying and giving in marriage seems to go on with unfailing regularity.

It seems rather rude on our part that our visitor should have been left to my sole care, so I say apologetically—

"I hope you don't mind having only me to drive you? The phaeton holds only two with Tommy behind to open gates."

"No, indeed;" he replies emphatically. "I am very glad to have you by yourself. I want to know you a little better than I do at present."

I am startled. Has he really fallen in love with me, and were the girls right to look so triumphant when they left us? Why should he all at once want to know more of me? He has made no attempt to do so until now.

"Thank you," I say confusedly. "I have a note to write before I go out, and we must stop at the post-office. I hope you don't mind waiting?"

"Not at all," he answers, taking up a newspaper, while I sit down to indite the first letter I have ever sent to a man.

What shall I say? My brain whirls so with the delightful thought that I am going to address him, that he will read what I have written and will think of me and of the dark cold drive, and my fingers tremble so much, that I can do nothing but sit in a brown study and dream my dream over again. I do not return to realities until I hear the phaeton coming round to the door.

"Isn't the letter written?" asks the Colonel, with an amused smile, as if he was watching me all the time.

"No," I reply; and I turn to my blank sheet of paper.

What shall I say? I write, "Dear Mr. Sargent," but it looks too familiar. I take a fresh sheet. "Miss Freda Middleton presents her compliments"—that looks too formal. I could cry in my vexation, for the consciousness that I am being waited for drives all ideas out of my head.

"Would it not be better to wait till we come in again?" asks the Colonel kindly.

"No; it must be written now. I shall never get another opportunity," I say despairingly.

In the distance I see my father returning from the church. I can only write—and such writing!—"With many thanks.—Freda Middleton," on a third sheet of paper. I burn the spoilt sheets, and rush to my room with my letter. Really, now it is done, I do not think I could have said any more.

When I am dressed for the drive, my father is talking to Colonel Brocklehurst at the door.

It is very odd, but I am sure they are talking about me by the way in which they stop; and my father looks at me with a curious amused interest. I expect that he will announce his intention of driving his friend instead of me; but he does not, which seems rather a want of courtesy on his part. He stands at the door watching us as we depart, smiling thoughtfully.

I am so dreadfully nervous that I nearly forget to post my letter, and I have raised it to drop into the box before I discover that it is open and that I have the stamps to buy and envelope, but I get it all safely over and then we proceed on our drive.

Colonel Brocklehurst is a very pleasant companion. I had expected that his conversation would consist of pig-sticking, tiger-hunting stories; but he does not talk about himself at all. He talks about the girls and about me; he asks how we spend our time, what amusement we have, what we have done and thought and said almost since we were born.

I am awfully frightened. Joined to his desire to drive alone with me and papa's odd look at me, it seems as if he were thinking of marriage. I dislike the idea more than ever, but I do think it would be a pity if he were lost entirely to the family, so I praise my sisters heartily and hardly let him talk about me at all.

I laud Naomi's beauty and sweetness; and he admits she is the prettiest girl he ever saw. I extol Una, and describe the cakes and jam and potted meats she turns out, and her clever management of her very small housekeeping allowance.

I tell him how clever Mona is, and how beautifully she draws, and how Eulalie is so good and honest and kind, though she seems rough, and how Vera sings like an angel and is the sweetest and best of girls. He listens, profoundly interested; my domestic history does not bore him in the least. When we reach home, he says heartily that he has never enjoyed a drive more in his life.

The time goes on, and the last day of the old year comes round. The past week seems to have flown, perhaps because one day has been so exactly like another. Colonel Brocklehurst has certainly been devoted to me; he has singled me out in the most marked way from the others, but he has never said one word of what even an old man might say of love.

"He will not," declares Una; "he knows you think him too old. You must do it today, for he leaves to-morrow, and, as he has not done it yet, he won't do it at all. If you don't, I'll ask him his intentions."

"I cannot, Una!" I cry.

They all gather round me, petting, coaxing, encouraging.

"You will not need to say much," they urge. "Just call up a look, and let him see what you mean, and he will be ready enough to do the rest."

"He is so old, Una!" I wail.

"What matter? So much the better. Look at the Townshends, and the Wilsons, and the Crosses, and ever so many more! Are they any happier for marrying young men? And think of us!"

"We shall be six old maids if you do not."

Oscar Sargent has not faded from my memory, but he has become a painful reminiscence, for day after day has gone by and he has never so much as acknowledged the receipt of the eighteen stamps. Every morning, in trembling hope and fear, I have been at the door to receive the postman, but no letter has come for me. Perhaps he was hurt by the shortness and coldness of mine. Perhaps he has simply forgotten my existence, and, when he got the letter, wondered who in the world it could be from, or thought it was a mistake. I feel very sad, and Cree has become dull with a dulness that it has never had before. Almost any change would be for the better.

While they are all gathered round me, counselling, consoling, and encouraging, a message comes for Una. Papa wants to speak to her in the study.

"Don't go and do it until I come back," she says most needlessly, for I am not in such a hurry that I require to be held back.

She does not return for ten minutes; when she does come, it is with a very long face.

"Colonel Brocklehurst has gone away," she announces.

"Gone!"

We are petrified. Can he have perceived our designs upon him at last, and fled from us in terror?

"Gone to Dretheourt," Una adds. "It seems that the Wolseleys are relations or connections of his. He is coming back to-night."

We are quite depressed for the whole of the day. Even I, who am to be congratulated on my chance of deliverance, have a sense of disappointment. It was so odd of him, too, to run away without saying goodbye, though he will return to-night. And he never told us he knew the Wolseleys. What a man of mystery he is!

It is quite late before we hear his returning wheels. He has not gone in our phaeton, but by rail, and would have to hire a carriage to come back, as I know only too well. Was it real, that wonderful journey, or did I dream it? Was it only a week ago that it happened? It seems like years—it seems unreal! If I had ever heard it alluded to, it would have been more like fact and less like imagination, but no one knows anything about it. I am beginning to think that Oscar Sargent never really existed except in my own brain.

Was that his voice, or am I dreaming again? The door opens, and Colonel Brocklehurst enters with a radiant face, and behind him comes a fair young man with bright kind eyes.

"I must apologise for bringing my nephew back with me, Miss Middleton," says the Colonel. "He was so anxious to make your acquaintance that he insisted on coming at once. I hope you can give him house-room for a night. I think he has already had the honor of making the acquaintance of one of you?" he adds, looking at me with quite an affectionate smile.

"Didn't you know he was my uncle?" Oscar asks me later on. "He got out of the railway-carriage just before you jumped in. I was going to Dretheourt; and, when he heard it, he said that that was close to where his old friend John Middleton lived, and that he would go so far with me and trust to finding a welcome at Cree, though he would take you so much by surprise."

If "happy's the wooing that's not long a-doing," ours surely must be the happiest that ever was, for before they have left off singing the Christmas hymns in church—long before the holly-berries are withered—we are engaged. The fact is, there has been so little left to do—it was all really done on Christmas Eve.

Colonel Brocklehurst tells me of his surprise when, on the day after Christmas Day, he received his grand-nephew's letter, informing him of how he had accidentally met one of the Misses Middleton of Cree Rectory, and how he had fallen madly, passionately, agonisingly in love, and asking would his uncle get him invited to the Rectory, or he would never be happy again. He also tells me how he had communicated the news to my father, and said what a nice fellow Oscar was, and asked his permission to introduce him, though Oscar in his impatience had not waited till he was formally invited to the Rectory.

And now, the Colonel having wooed me for his nephew, seems to us to be wooing Naomi for himself; but it would be too absurd if she were to be my great-aunt in law, would in not?

A RESIDENT of the provinces had come to spend a few days with some relatives in Paris. Becoming infatuated with the gay capital, he remained out of patience on the part of his hosts ceased to be a virtue. In vain to remonstrate, they threw out a hint: "Don't you think, my dear fellow," they said to the boy, "that your wife and children must miss you?" "No doubt. Thanks for the suggestion. I'll send for them."

To reprove small faults with undue vehemence is as absurd as if a man should take a hammer because he saw a fly on a friend's forehead.

He is a good man indeed who does all the good he talks of.

THE DONKEY DETECTIVE.

After a grand dinner in Aleppo once, given by the English consul, some of the silver-ware used at the fete mysteriously disappeared. Great consternation prevailed, especially amongst the servants, for they well knew that suspicion would rest upon them. Even the policemen—or cavasses, as they are termed in Turkey—who were in the house during the feast did not escape suspicion. After mature reflection upon the mishap, the consul called the most intelligent of the cavasses. He questioned him. The cavass insisted that he did not steal the silver, and that he did not know who did.

But the consul was a very good detective, and shrewd in his knowledge of men and things. He was also a cool-tempered man. He said to the cavass;

"There is no use to swear. I am not going to change my opinion. I have good reasons to suspect you to be the thief, and I mean that you shall bring my silver to me within twenty-four hours, else you will be put in the hands of the authorities, and you will not get away until I find my property. There is no other alternative."

"Mr. Consul," said the cavass, "I have already told you that I did not steal your silver, but still you suspect me. I will however do all in my power to detect the robber. I only beg of you to do for me passively all I will ask you to do."

The consul replied.

"I will do so, provided you bring back the property."

The cavass asked for two or three hours' time, and left. In an hour he came back, bringing with him by the bridle a little donkey. This he presented to the consul, stating that the donkey would find the thief if he would allow the donkey to be placed in one of the rooms, and the window-shutters to be closed, so as to darken the room.

"Do so," said the consul, who became curious to see what would result.

After the donkey was placed in the dark room, the cavass asked the consul to call everybody in the house, employes, cavasses, and servants. They came, and were placed in front of the door of the room where the donkey was. When all were present, the cavass said.

"Now we are to enter this room one by one, and as soon as we get in we are to take a pull at the donkey's tail. The donkey will make no sign, say nothing, unless the robber is amongst us. Then you may depend on it he will bray, and indicate who has stolen your goods. Oh, do not laugh! I have had occasion to make use of this remedy. It never fails. Now," said he to the consul, "you go in first and pull the tail. We will all follow you, one by one."

The singular procession began, the consul taking the lead. Every one entered the room and pulled at the donkey's tail; but the donkey never brayed. After the performance was over and all came out, the cavass asked if all of them had really pulled at the tail.

All responded emphatically, "Yes!"

"How strange it is," said he, "that the donkey did not bray! It seems that the thief is not to be found among us. I cannot explain it otherwise."

He then formed them in a circle around him.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "hands up, please!"

Every one obeyed.

"Here is your man, Mr. Consul," said he, all at once, pointing to one of the party, a servant. "You see, every one who entered the room and pulled the tail thus got his hands blackened, while this man did not pull the tail, as he was sure the donkey would bray. Consequently his hands are clean."

The man confessed, and the silver was returned.

HARD'N'COLD.—An old gentleman of wonderfully good for one who has passed fourscore years was stopping at Saratoga. He was a widower and a man of large wealth. Widows as well as maidens enjoyed his society, for he was witty and wise. One day he was introduced to a young lady. After a pleasant chat about a newcomer, the lady remarked, "Are you married?"

"Oh, no; I am susceptible though," replied the venerable one.

"By-the-way, my dear young lady," added he, "are you married?"

"I am not," she replied; "and I have made up my mind I never will be unless I can get a good catch, a man with brains and money."

"Then," said the old gentleman, "you are after money with a husband. Well, I've plenty of money, and brains enough to look after it. How would you like such a young man as myself?"

"I like you very well. You are sensible and, I believe, rich; but you lack one—just one—only one requirement, so far as I am able to judge."

"Well, what is that, madam?" inquired the venerable one.

"You do not seem to have a bad cough," she replied.

The dazed veteran arose and beat a hasty retreat.

ACTRESS to washerwoman who has brought her bill: "How can you be so impertinent as to dun me in this way?" Washerwoman: "Impertinent! What do you mean? Who are you, I should like to know? If I choose to pay a quarter for a ticket, you have to beat on the stage for my amusement!"

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

One of the most remarkable applications of photography is that by which it is now made to register, and in the most accurate manner, the mechanical motion of the heart. The device by which this result is attained is indeed a triumph of inventive skill. It consists of a thin India rubber bag, to which a short glass tube is attached; sufficient mercury is poured into the apparatus to fill the bag and a portion of the tube, and the instrument is then placed over the heart of the person to be examined. Arranged in this manner, every pulsation of the heart is indicated by a corresponding movement of the mercury of the tube, and by suitable photographic apparatus, provided with a moving sensitive slip of paper, a perfect registration of the extent and rate of the pulsation is obtained. The interesting fact is made known by this process that the fall of the pulse sometimes takes place in successive horizontal places, the column descending two or three times before falling altogether.

Electric head-lights for locomotives have been tried on some of the Russian railways and given up. The lamps were powerful, throwing a beam of light a mile ahead of the train, and so far as the illumination of the railway track was concerned, the locomotive drivers admitted their utility. The objection to them was, however, that the contrast between the lighted space and the darkness on either side was so sharp that it annoyed the eyesight, and in some cases after a time incapacitated the drivers altogether. A somewhat similar difficulty occurred when electric lights were first used in lighthouses on the English channel. The light was so powerful and affected the vision of pilots unused to it to such an extent that they found themselves unable to estimate the distance of their vessels from the beacon. The consequence was that ships frequently anchored far out in the channel, and in the paths of passing vessels, so that collisions frequently occurred.

An American ranchman had employed a Mexican herder. The American owed the Mexican sixty dollars, and as money was not very plentiful with him, began to devise means of a cheaper settlement. One evening, while the two men were in the kitchen, the American took down a coffee mill and said: "This is the most wonderful mill that ever was. It was recently invented in the United States, and is valued at one hundred dollars. See here, instead of having to crush your coffee with a stone, you put it in this way and grind it up. I never saw anything like it. Jones over here wants it so bad he don't know what to do. Offered me a hundred dollars for it, but I would not accept the offer. It's worth more." The Mexican listened attentively, but assumed an air of indifference. The American left the mill on a shelf. When he got up next morning, he found that the Mexican and the coffee mill had disappeared. "You can't place any confidence in the honesty of a Mexican," said he. "That fellow is positively dishonest."

The story runs that in the olden time the Dutch on the Hudson were particularly fond of lobsters, a favorite dish with them at home. Some vessels were employed in bringing the lobsters alive from the old home, and when here they were eagerly devoured. One day a Dutch galliot loaded with lobsters was sailing proudly up the East River when she struck on the rocks in Hell Gate and went to pieces. No particular effort was made to save the cargo, the lusty Dutch sailors having all they could do to get on shore themselves. It was supposed that the lobsters, not being natives of our shores, and not acclimated, as it were, would die out, but the fellows had life enough left in them to scatter, and for a time nothing was seen of them. In a few years the people were surprised to find lobsters in large numbers, but it was more surprising, that they were much better than those at home. From this little commencement—simply a Dutch galliot loaded with Dutch lobsters wrecked on Hell Gate—the great lobster interests of our country have grown up.

In Switzerland members of the national council receive ten shillings per day, which is paid out of the federal treasury. Members of the State councils are paid by the cantons, and their salaries range from six shillings to ten shillings per day. In the United States representatives and delegates each receive $5,000 per year and [illegible] travelling expenses at the rate of [illegible] per mile. In Norway the members of the Storthing receive [illegible] per day while in session, which is [illegible] months in each year. In neither Senators nor deputies are paid, but they get free passes over all the railways in the kingdom, and some other concessions as to taxes and patronage. In Spain the members are not paid. In Greece the Senators get $100 per month, and members of the representative chamber $40 per month. In all the local legislatures in Germany the members, with one or two exceptions, are paid, the salaries averaging in Prussia [illegible] per day. In Austria $5. The members of Parliament of Great Britain receive no pay and have no direct patronage.

THE white tablecloth, once the pride of good housewives, is rapidly giving place to soft Persian covers, which are not handsomely decorated themselves or are very nearly covered with floral patterns.

Our Young Folks.

"HANDSOME IS."

BY L. P.

THE turkey was a very handsome turkey, his comb was as red as a scarlet coat. And when he spread his tail it was a wonderful sight.

He strutted about in the poultry-yard, and was so proud of himself, that the barn-door fowls never ventured to speak to him, for he looked calmly over their heads as if he did not see them.

In his own family he was even more disagreeable. The turkey hens were quite afraid of him, for if he could get at the eggs he was sure to smash them.

As for the turkey chicks; they knew that the best thing they could do was to keep out of his way, for he pecked them and drove them about, and would have killed them if the turkey hen had not taken them out of his sight and carefully kept them away until they were old enough to take care of themselves.

But the turkey-cock never for a moment considered that he was in any way unamiable: he believed that, as he was such a magnificent looking bird, he might do anything he pleased, and that every one must give way to him.

"Even the race of man," said he to himself, as little Miss Dolly and small Master Freddy fled before him.

They never ventured to cross the poultry-yard if the great turkey-cock was there; and when they came upon him accidentally poor little Miss Dolly had many a tumble and a torn frock in escaping from him.

Fortunately he was not always in the yard, for after breakfast he generally rambled off into the fields or the woods until supper-time; sometimes alone, sometimes in company with other turkeys, but always holding himself as the head of the party, and obliging the others to go the way he wanted.

"I am the king," he would say. "I am the handsomest turkey of you all, and by far the handsomest bird in the poultry-yard."

And so presuming upon his strength and his handsome appearance, he became more intolerable every day.

Now in the poultry yard there were some spirited little bantams who did not like the tyrannical ways of the turkey.

"Handsome as he is," said one of the bantams, "and overbearing and quarrelsome, I have no doubt but that he is a coward at heart if one only knew how to prove it. Most tyrants are."

"As for handsome," replied another, "I have got to think him quite ugly; he struts about in such a ridiculous manner, with his head up in the air and such a haughty look about him, that one can't think of anything beautiful with him. Why, I think old Russet is a great deal better looking."

At this all the other bantams began to laugh, for old Russet was an ancient barn-door fowl who had a crooked leg and could not get about much, but who was always ready to help the mother hens to take care of their chicks, or to show any new fowls the ways of the poultry-yard, and to be civil to them.

"I don't care for your laughing," said the bantam. "Whenever I look at old Russet, I think of all her kindness; and her plain brown feathers seem to me finer than the turkey-cock's grand plumage."

"Well," said the first bantam who had spoken, "I propose that we do something to show the turkey that we are not going to be treated as he treats us; that we are as much masters here as he is, and that we are not afraid of him though he is so strong and great."

So the bantams went around the yard in order to see what the other fowls thought of the proposal.

And the Cochin Chinas, the silver-spangled Hamburghs, and the black Spanish fowls said they would willingly join, for they disliked the airs that the turkey gave himself.

Therefore, about the time of the turkey's return, a band of determined fowls gathered together to demand from him a cessation of his domineering and assumptive ways, or to punish him on the spot.

They had not, however, waited long, when, to their surprise, the turkey-cock was seen coming along in a very battered and dejected manner, as if he had been in a fight, from which he was returning by no means the conqueror.

Evidently their enemy had had a fall, so that now was a good time time for coming to terms with him.

By degrees they elicited from his companions the cause of the turkey-cock's forlorn condition.

It appeared that in one part of the wood they had come upon a pic-nic party. One little girl had on a red frock, which so infuriated the turkey that he made a sudden attack upon her and knocked her down, and would have otherwise hurt her, but her father flew to the rescue, and, having a stout stick in his hand, belabored the turkey until he felt as if every one of his bones were broken.

And the pain he felt, added to the mortification of being treated with such indignity before his companions, completely subdued his spirit.

"It served him right, though," said one of the spangled Hamburghs. "I knew he would meet with his reward at last."

"And it's saved us the trouble of doing it," said a black Spanish fowl, who was not of a belligerent nature.

The bantams were not quite sure they were satisfied, for they did not mind a little fighting now and then.

But old Russet said—

"It's all turned out for the best, and I am not sorry that the lesson has been learned outside the poultry-yard."

The turkey-cock was certainly in a pitiable condition; he was unable to leave the poultry-yard for many days, and old Russet waited upon him, and was so kind to him, that at last he said—

"Why, madame, I think you are quite handsome, and I never thought anyone handsome but myself before."

The other fowls laughed, and one of the Cochin Chinas said very gravely—

"Ah, you have found at last that 'handsome is that handsome does.'"

NO PLACE LIKE HOME.

BY M. L. B.

"SO you want to see the world, do you, Tom?" said a fine black cat to her young son one day. "Now, shall I tell you a tale of what I once went through when I was young?"

"Oh, yes, please do," said he.

"Well, then, come and lie down here, and keep still." Tom did as he was told, then Miss Puss said, "I don't quite know where my first home was, but when I was young I was shut up in the midst of a lot of straw, and for some time all that I felt was jolt, jolt, jolt. Though there was noise all round me I went to sleep, and when I woke I found I was in the arms of a girl.

"She said I was a dear sweet kit and all her own, and that I should live with her all my life.

"When I was three months old I was like you, Tom—I thought I should like to go and see the world. So one fine spring day I set out.

"For the first two or three days I had birds and mice for my food; of course I had to catch them, and I drank from the streams on the way.

"At last I came to a small town, and was on my way up one of the streets, when I saw a large kind of cage on wheels; no one was near it, so I went close up to it to see what it could be.

"At my old home there was a bird kept in a cage, so I knew what a cage was for. But it was a strange sight that I saw in this one, for in it there was a gray cat, two white mice, and five birds.

"The cat had gone to sleep, and on her head sat a bird; the mice were close by her, and had got some bits of cheese in their paws which they sat up to eat. 'Good day,' said I, 'friend cat,' and she got up to look at me. 'You are well off here,' I went on to say; 'to think that you should have all these birds and mice shut up in here so that you can take one and eat it just when you like.'

"'Oh, dear no,' said Mrs. Cat, 'that is not the case at all; I wish I could. You had ——'

"But I did not hear the rest of what she had to say, for a man's hand had caught hold of me by the scruff of my neck, and I heard him say—

"'Here, mate, I have got hold of a fine cat—she'll just do to put in with Mrs. Tab.

"But I was not put in the cage for a long time, and a hard life I led for a few weeks.

"Each day the two men would let out the mice and birds; but when I ran to try and catch them they would beat me.

"Now and then I had a chance of a talk with Mrs. Tab, and she told me I would have to learn to let the mice crawl on me, and the birds to perch on my head, and then I should be put in the cage like she was, and go from town to town, 'and then,' she said, 'you will see lots of the world.'

"'Oh, dear!' said I, 'I have seen more of it now than I want to see, and I wish I was back at my old home.'

"At last they thought I was fit to go in the cage, and I was shut in, and off we went. In each street that we went through a crowd would come around and look at us. Then the men would make us show off, and tell the boys and girls that Mrs. Tab and I were so fond of the mice and birds that we should not eat them if we had the chance.

"It was no use for us to say this was not true, for boys and girls don't know what we mean when we speak.

"Each day I would long for a chance to get off, and at last it came. We had been let out of the cage to have our food, and I saw the door of the room in which we were was not shut. Out I ran, but the men saw me, and one of them came out to catch me.

"'He'll stop that cat!' he said. 'I'll give five dollars to the boy who brings her back to me.'

"On and on I went, as fast as I could. I could hear the steps of the boys and men, and the noise of their shouts I thought would drive me wild.

"I had gone on a long way, at last I felt I must rest, and as I came to a large tree, I ran up to the top long and thought I was safe, but no, one boy had still kept up the chase, and he stood now at the foot of the tree.

"'Ah, Miss Puss,' said he, 'I've got you now. I can climb as well as you.'

"Then he set to to come up the tree; at last he was quite near me. Oh, what could I do? I could not jump down for the leaves of the tree were so thick, and I could not push on. And then I heard a crack, and the branch I sat down.

"I held on tight till then I heard a cry from the boy, and a crash, and a thud; he was on the ground, and I was safe, for I saw he was hurt, and could think no more of me.

"I came down the tree and ran off a short way to a barn that I saw and in it I went.

"It was a good place to hide in; no one I felt sure would find me now. I had a good wash, for my coat was full of dust, then I lay down and went to sleep.

"When I woke up, I heard a boy say to a man—

"'Tom Smith broke his leg; he went up a tree in search of a cat, and the branch broke, and he fell.'

"As soon as I could get out of the barn I left, and went on some way till I came to a house where a young girl saw me. She said—

"'Oh, what a nice puss! Do come here to me!'

"Her voice was so kind that I went to her at once. Then she got me some milk to drink. I kept near the house for some days, and each day the girl gave me lots of nice food to eat.

"As I found she was so kind me, I made up my mind not to leave that house, and it is the home we are in now. The lady is Miss Blanche, and she says I have but one fault—I do not seem to know how to catch a mouse. Take my word for it, Tom, you have a good home, and the best thing you can do is to stay in it."

THE OLD WOMAN OF THE SEA.

BY A. F. S.

THE fisherman's children, Felix and Ella, had been walking barefoot along the beach, and they began to climb the rocks.

A little way up there was a cave, and at the dark end of the cave they found a crystal door.

"I wonder what is inside," said little Ella to her brother.

"Let us knock," said Felix.

But he could not reach the knocker. So he held up his little sister, and she gave a long rat-tat-tat-tat-tat.

Then they both said at the same time—

"Oh, what shall we say when they open the door?"

The crystal door brightened. Some one inside was bringing a light. It was an old woman with a lantern in her hand. Her dress was of a brown color, like the rocks, and it was stuck all over with slimy green moss; she had sea-weed hanging about her head instead of hair.

Felix and Ella turned round and scrambled and tumbled down the rocks, and ran away home in a fright.

Their father's boat came back and there was a happy supper in the cottage. The children told about the crystal door.

"My dear children," said the fisherman, you have lost a great chance. That must have been the place where the fairies of the sea live, and the fairies might have given us a present."

The children looked day after day for the crystal door, but they could not even find the cave.

A few days after, however, when Ella was sitting on the strand playing with Felix, all at once they heard a sweet voice singing.

The children were looking towards the sea, when they saw a long silvery tail disappearing. They went home and told their parents.

"Ah," said their father, "we must catch that fine big fish."

And after a whole week of trying, the fisherman caught the singing fish in his net.

He went for his wife to help him carry home the net, and the children ran after them in great glee.

The head and hands of the fish were like those of a beautiful maiden, and she had long golden hair. She was all clothed in silver, and she had a belt of gold, and below the belt the silver was all fish scales, and ended in a fish's tail.

The fisherman's wife said:

"What a fine fish! It will have a delicious flavor. But I am afraid the fish kettle is not large enough."

"Never mind about the size of the kettle. Look here," said the man, "can't you twist the big fish round, as you twist the whiting?"

"Father," said the boy, "I'd like to make the big fish sing first."

"And I," said little Ella, "would like to let the big fish go back into the water."

"It shan't have any chance of going back into the water, unless it sings us a song," the man said.

The big fish had now been brought into the cottage and laid on the table. It raised its head with the long golden hair, and leant on its white hands, and flapped its long scaly tail about while it sang.

"Why, it is a mermaid," said the fisherman, who had put on his spectacles. And they were all so sorry for the poor mermaid that they began to cry: and the fisherman took her by the shoulders, and the wife took her by the waist, and the two children took her by the long fish tail, and they all carried her down to the sea: and then they knelt down, so as not to hurt her, and it was in a muddy pool too, but they did not mind that, and they said, "One, two, three, and away!" and popped her into the water. She went swimming away, singing—

"In to the strand, out of the town—
Three steps up and one step down.
Knock three knocks at the crystal door,
And fill the pocket and the pinafore."

While the mermaid was swimming away her fins and her tail made the water ripple and sparkle in the moonlight. All the sparkles were silver money.

But the fisherman did not take out his boat while all the money lasted, so after a few weeks he and his family were as poor as ever. Then one day Felix said:

"What was it about the crystal door?"

And Ella remembered—up three steps from the strand, and down one; and then they were to knock three knocks and fill the pocket and the pinafore.

So the boy and girl went to the strand, and began to climb the rocks. After going up three steps and down one, they could see quite plainly the cave far up. They took great care of each other, climbing up to it; and then they went in and saw the crystal door. It was bright and light within. Felix held up Ella, and she gave three knocks with the silver knocker.

The old woman with the seaweed hair and the mossy gown opened the door, and asked:

"What do you want?"

"If you please," said Ella, "we want to fill the pocket and the pinafore."

"Come in," said the old woman.

They followed her along a rocky passage, and into a great hall with walls and roof of rock; and all the roof was white and glittering with beautiful things like icicles set with diamonds. The old woman of the sea said:

"I am very fond of the mermaids, and they always climb up here from the storms."

"Now," she said, "we shall have some tea." She spread the tea on a table of rock in the corner. They had oyster shells for plates, and other shells for cups, and a very big shell that looked all twists and corners was a teapot.

"No, thank you," said little Ella.

"Why not?" asked the old woman.

Ella got frightened. Felix spoke up for her.

"Ella thinks the tea might be fishy."

"Fishy tea is very nice, when you are used to it," said the Old Woman of the Sea. "So you had better begin and get used to it." She filled the cups. It was seaweed tea! And they had shell-fish instead of bread and butter.

"What is that noise?" said the children. There was a pattering like hail.

"Diamonds! Gather them up!" said the old woman. The beautiful white crystals that hung from the roof were dropping their diamonds in showers on the floor. Then the old woman said—

"You let the mermaid go that day:
Pick up all you can, and run away."

Felix filled his pocket, and Ella filled her pinafore, and they thanked the old woman of the sea, and wished her "good night," and she let them out by the crystal door.

It was quite dark when they got back to the village, and they lost their way three times. Houses were there that had not been built when they went out. Ella peeped in through their own cottage window, and saw their father's supper spread, and their mother with her hair grey, was looking at a little toy-boat and an old doll that lay in her lap. Their mother's hair had been brown this morning, and why was she crying over their toys?

They pulled the latch and opened the door.

"Mother, dear, don't cry because we are late," said Felix.

"We have heaps of diamonds!" cried Ella.

Their mother stood up and looked at them as if she did not know them. Their father came in. His hair was white also.

The diamonds shone dazzling as Felix and Ella poured them out on the table in the poor dim light of the one candle; Felix gave a shout, and Ella gave a cry. Why, they were grown up, and no longer children!

"How is this, mother," said Felix when we have been only away a few hours?"

The father and mother embraced them with tears of joy. The one evening in the cave had been twenty years, and the people had thought their children had been killed on the rocks and swept away by the sea-waves.

They sold the diamonds, and left the cottage, and "dwelt in marble halls;" but after awhile they wished they were only fisher-folk again, because they were rich without being happy.

And Ella and Felix soon wished they were children again. So they went back and knocked three knocks at the crystal door.

The old woman opened it, and said—

"What do you want, sir? What is your pleasure, my lady?"

"We want to have our father and mother happy again," they said. "We want to be children once more."

"Then come in this minute," said the old woman, "and take my seaweed tea."

And glad they were to get the fishy seaweed tea.

"When we let the mermaid go," they said, "you robbed us of twenty years of our life."

"No, sir," said the old woman; "no indeed, my lady. I showed you that diamonds do not mean happiness, and that it is very sweet after all to be children. Now get along out!"

The last word sounded very rude, so Mr. Felix and Miss Ella said "thank you," and left the rocky house as fast as they could.

The moment the crystal door closed behind them, they were only little barefoot children. They scrambled down the rocks and ran away home, oh, so happy to be children again.

The father and mother met them at the door of the cottage. And the father and mother were not gray yet, and were happy: and the toy-boat was on the shelf, and the old doll too.

MY FIRST.

BY E. C. S.

The evening service through at last,
The boys around the lych-gate waited
To see the girls come tripping past,
Like snowbirds willing to be mated.

Not braver he that leaps the wall
By level muskets flashes lighted
Than I, who stepped before them all,
Who longed to see me get the mitten.

But no; she blushed and took my arm!
We let the old folks have the highway
And started toward the Maple Farm
Along a kind of lover's by-way.

I can't remember what we said;
'Twas nothing worth a song or story;
Yet that rude path by which we sped
Seemed all transformed and in a glory.

To have her with me there alone—
'Twas love and fear and triumph blended.
At last we reached the footworn stone
Where that delicious journey ended.

She shook her ringlets from her hood,
And with a "Thank you, Ned," dissembled;
But yet I knew she understood
With what a daring wish I trembled.

A cloud passed kindly overhead,
The moon was slyly peeping through it,
Yet hid its face as if it said,
"Come, now or never! do it! do it!"

My lips till then had only known
The kiss of mother and of sister,
But somehow, full upon her own
Sweet, rosy, darling mouth—I kissed her.

Perhaps 'twas boyish love, yet still,
Oh, listless woman, weary lover!
To feel once more that fresh, wild thrill
I'd give—but who can live youth over.

THE FIREPLACE.

It is hardly possible nowadays to believe that our ancestors, before the fourteenth century, kept no fires at all, except for the purposes of cooking and smelting. As late as the reign of Henry VIII., in England, the students of the University of Oxford were allowed no means for warming themselves, except by bodily exercise, and after their supper was over they went back to their books until nine o'clock in winter, when they took a run for half an hour to get warm before going to bed.

The houses occupied by our British ancestors were circular, and shaped like an ordinary tea-canister, with a hole in the top to let off the smoke of the fire kindled for cooking. The walls were made of stakes and wattling, like hurdles, and thatched with reeds or straw. The only light was that admitted by the door. Domestic in-door life must have been a very dreary thing in those days.

Chimneys were first introduced about the year one thousand two hundred, and one chimney was allowed for manor and religious houses, the great hall of a castle, and a lord's house. Why the law imposed this restriction, it is not easy to tell. When, at another period, windows were taxed, we can understand why their number should be reduced to the minimum.

In the houses of the common people there was a rere-dosse, or raised hearthstone, in the middle of the room, and the smoke escaped as it could through the crevices of the roof.

Coal came into use five hundred years ago, and a law was soon passed prohibiting its consumption in London or in the suburbs. The dyers and brewers who carried on their business in that region found that coals were so much cheaper than wood, now that the forests about London were beginning to be exhausted, as to induce them to go on in defiance of the law, which, after a while, was repealed. In Elizabeth's reign, however, the use of coal in London was forbidden during the sitting of Parliament, on account of the annoyance which the smoke and dust gave to the gentlemen assembled there. When we consider how universally coals are used in London at the present time, such a thing as a wood fire being scarcely ever seen, it is difficult to believe that, as late as the seventeenth century, coals were used only by the poorer classes, and hawked about the streets on men's backs.

After fireplaces came into use, and wood continued to be burned, the "hand" or "and iron," was invented, and was commonly known by the name of the "dogs;" and this recalls the fact that, one or two generations ago, the "and iron" was sometimes made in the form of a dog. There was also a smaller and middle set of irons, called "creepers," to keep the shorter sticks of wood in their place.

The "curfew" was an iron or copper vessel, carefully riveted, that was used for covering the embers at night, and was in use as early as the eleventh century. Its original intention was to guard against the danger of fire, which must have been very great when the common houses were all of wood, and constructed in a very slight manner, with roofs of thatch. King Alfred ordered the people of his realm, at the ringing of the curfew-bell at eight o'clock, to cover up their fires and go to bed. The curfew seems to have had a peculiar charm for some of our greatest poets. Milton uses it with great effect in these beautiful lines—

"On a plot of rising ground
Hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar."

The allusion in the first line of Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is familiar to our readers—

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day."

An old play, dated 1631, indicates that the hour of ringing was somewhat later than it had been. One of the characters, the sexton, says, "Well, 'tis nine o'clock; 'tis time to ring curfew." The custom of ringing the nine o'clock bell still continues, not only in England, but in some parts of this country.

After the consumption of coal began to supersede the general use of wood, grates were invented, the old andirons forming a sort of raised cradle for the support of the bars. A back-plate was then added, and this was adorned with ornamental castings, often with the arms of the family, and under the lowest bar there was a filagree ornament of polished metal. In process of time the grate, which at first was a movable piece of furniture, became a fixture, so as to occupy the entire space, and the "dogs" were dispensed with. It was this innovation that drove away the "cosy chimney corner," of which we have all read, and which some of us well remember among the delights of our childhood. Our modern fireirons—the shovel, poker, and pair of tongs—were not much used until coal and grates were introduced.

Grains of Gold.

Be not in too great haste, but have patience.

Nothing is more terrible than active ignorance.

Treachery and falsehood are the vices of cowardice.

It is a joy to think the best we can of human kind.

It is easy to find reasons why other folks should be patient.

Love is without prudence, and anger without counsel.

When a heart is full of errors there is no room for the truth.

Ignorance is a prolonged infancy only deprived of its charm.

Genuine benevolence is not stationary; it goeth about doing good.

Be gentle with children; some day they will be men and women.

Everything, even piety, is dangerous in a man without judgment.

Simplicity of character is the natural result of profound thoughts.

Never think you can make yourself great by making another less.

Much of our lives depends upon the persons with whom we live familiarly.

I will chide no heathen in the world, but myself, against whom I know most faults.

It is with our judgments as our watches, none go just alike, yet each believes his own.

We complain that our life is short, and yet we throw away much of it, and are weary of many of its parts.

To be perfectly just is an attribute of the divine nature; to be so to the uttermost of our abilities, is the glory of man.

Since time is not a person we can overtake when he is past, let us honour him with mirth and cheerfulness of heart while he is passing.

Despise not any man, and do not spurn anything; for there is no man that has not his hour, nor is there anything that has not its place.

I pity the men whose natural pleasures are burdens, and who fly from joy—as these splenetic and morose souls do—as if it were really an evil in itself.

Every day and hour we are sowing the seeds of character, which one day will astonish even ourselves by blossoming forth in actions of which we had not supposed ourselves capable.

It is very true that precepts are useful; but practice and imitation go far beyond them: hence the importance of watching early habits, that they may be free from what is objectionable.

Femininities.

Seven women occupy the debtor's cell in the Macon county, Ill., jail.

When the heart prompts us to listen, how keen and attentive is the ear.

Cranberry jelly mixed with cold water makes a refreshing drink for the sick.

There is one divorce in every four and a half marriages, a statistician claims.

A girl may be like sugar for two reasons. She may be sweet and she may be full of grit.

Essence of quassia will drive away flies, and cucumber peel is detested by cockroaches.

A lover of statistics has calculated that 10,000 stitches are required for a hand-sewed shirt.

To cure a wart: Scrape a carrot fine, mix with salt, and apply as a poultice five or six nights.

A sponge may be cleansed by letting it lie covered with milk for 12 hours and then rinsing it in cold water.

A small bag of sulphur kept in a drawer or closet that is infested with red ants will quickly disperse them.

Disease often lurks in a dirty dishcloth, a greasy sink, an unclean teakettle and a poorly-ventilated oven.

A cross-eyed cat, one of the few known to be in existence, is owned by Mrs. George Hebard, of Hartford, Conn.

Flannel should be washed in hot soapsuds and rinsed in hot water containing soap enough to soften it a little.

Gail Hamilton says women will never rule the State until they give up their baby names. Guess that's so, Gallie.

When four women are walking abreast on the sidewalk they will break ranks for nothing except a man with a paint pot.

A carpet-sweeper is invaluable in a dining-room where small children eat, but should never be used for general sweeping.

Windows should never be washed while the sun shines on them, as it is impossible to polish them without leaving blue streaks.

The irritability that overtakes women so frequently may sometimes be clearly traced to an excessive indulgence in afternoon tea.

Preserving jars should be stood on their heads for at least an hour after sealing, when the liquor will escape if the jar contains air.

The ingratitude of the female heart is shown in a Missouri woman, who makes her pastor pay $58 for just one little brotherly smack.

Snaggs: "Do you waltz, Miss Biceps?" Miss B., stroke of the Vassar eight: "No; but I will put on the gloves with you for a couple of rounds."

Some Boston women are beginning to say that it gives them a headache to sit through a sermon with their bonnets on, and ask why they cannot take them off in church.

There is a young woman in Dakota who is successfully working a 160-acre farm, and she declares that she could work one twice as large if the men who want to marry her would stop bothering her.

"If a lady is beautiful, my son," said a latter-day Lord Chesterfield, "never fail to refer to her beauty." "What am I to do when the lady is plain?" inquired the junior. "Just the same," was the reply.

At Lenten service. Miss Mollie: "Come in our pew, Kate." Miss Kate: "Oh, not come in ours. We've got such nice, comfortable, high kneeling-cushions. They don't strain your polonaise a bit."

"You want to buy a stove? Certainly, ma'am. What kind of a stove?" "Well, we're just married and think of going to housekeeping, and as I don't know how to cook, I think I will take a cooking stove."

A small boy, the son of a gifted clergyman, was heard one night addressing the following petition to his Maker: "O God, please bless mamma and papa; but the less you have to do with Aunt Maria, the better. Amen."

Scene, telegraph office. "That makes ten words, madam." "Am I not entitled to send two words more?" "Certainly, madam." "Very well; then have the kindness to put the words 'In haste' on the envelope of the telegram."

It is the man who talks that lives the longest. The man who is talked to dies young. You don't believe it? Read this and be convinced: "Statistics show that the average life of a clergyman is 67 years, and that of a day laborer 32 years."

In kitchen-French "consommé" means clear soup of bouillon boiled down till very rich; "croquettes," a savory mince of fish or fowl, made with sauce into shapes and fried, and "croustades," fried forms of bread to serve mince or other meats upon.

Women accomplish their best work in the quiet seclusion of the home and family by sustained effort and patient perseverance in the path of duty. The influence they exercise, even though it be unrecorded, lives after them and in its consequences for ever.

He: "Well, here's good news at last. Tom's letter says that after years of quarreling he and Martha have stopped all discord and come to a perfect understanding." She: "Oh, I am so glad!" He: "Yes, I imagine Tom is, too; they have separated."

An exchange is asked the question: "How shall I stuff a deer's head?" It depends upon the party asked. If she is a rich dear, tell her you love her for herself alone; if she is poor, insist that you love her just as much as if she were an heiress to a large fortune.

"It is common sense and not education that makes a woman," said an old man mournfully. "I spent a little fortune educating my daughter, and when her education was completed she went off and married a dude who died of blood poisoning caused by sucking the head of his cane."

Masculinities.

In Bucks county lives a man named Buck Wheat.

Twenty-six young men of Oconomowoc, Wis., have organized a silk hat club.

Some men are so hard headed that softening of the brain would improve them.

If we do not flatter ourselves, the flattery of others will not be able to injure us.

He who has not a good memory should never take upon himself the trade of lying.

In China the highest recommendation a man can have is the fact of his having a wife.

The man who tries to please himself has an easier time than he who tries to please everybody.

A woman who marries "a perfect angel of a man" is usually a widow. This is tough, but it is true.

All men try to get the earth, but the earth gets them. This is not a joke; it is the grave and solemn truth.

Wife: "Am I as dear to you, John, as I was before we were married?" Husband, with a sigh: "Yes, a good deal dearer."

A young man with eyes possessing the peculiarities of those of an owl is said to be living in Lincoln, Placer county, Cal.

Talk about a man "giving up drinking for good!" That's not it at all. It is drinking for bad that a man ought to give up.

Brown: "Whose umbrella is this? It looks like one I lost." Smith: "I don't see how it can, for I scraped the handle and altered it generally."

William Bad a wealthy man of Melbourne, Australia, spends half of his income every year in relieving the needs of deserving people. Good for Bad.

In all cases of slander currency, whenever the forger of the lie is not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the endorsers.

More pointed than polite. Wife: "You haven't been inside of a church since we were married!" Husband, sorrowfully: "No; a burnt child dreads the fire."

Do not laugh at the gentleman with a bare poll, my son. It is not nearly so bad to have a head that is bald on the outside as to have a head that is bald on the inside.

One of our esteemed contemporaries takes 30 lines—about 140 words—to tell "where women are valuable." And yet he might have told it in one word—"everywhere."

A man would have no pleasure in discovering all the beauties of the universe, even in heaven itself, unless he had a partner to whom he might communicate his joys.

A stranger in the city recently was hunting for a man named Adams. When asked what Adams he wanted he answered: "The one that keeps an express office." He found him.

At a recent legislative reunion in Maine, Hannibal Hamlin, who will be 79 in August, participated in every dance and escorted home in the morning the prettiest girl in the room.

Almost every one has a predominant inclination to which all other desires and affections submit, and which governs him, though perhaps with some intervals, through the whole course of his life.

First young Boston blood: "Say, Duxley, did you ever see the sun rise?" Second young Boston blood: "No, Sam, I don't think I ever did. I don't remember that I ever staid up so late as that."

It was a prudent resolution which led the philosopher Kant to spend a quarter of an hour before he retired each night in abstracting his mind from its preoccupations; light sleepers might well adopt his method.

A Chinese writer says that a man could borrow money in China on the strength of his having a son, the idea being that a Chinaman makes it his first duty to pay his father's debts. Those heathen are simply hopeless.

"On next Sunday," said the minister to his congregation, "the funeral of Mr. Blank will be held in this church. I shall preach a funeral sermon on the occasion, and the man himself will be here the first time in 20 years."

Treasury clerks who count the trade dollars have to wear buckskin gloves or get sore fingers. Any sore spot on the finger is soon poisoned by contact with the metal. People who sigh to count dollars should bear this in mind.

The list of members of the Fiftieth Congress presents a number of presidential names. There is a Washington, an Adams, a Taylor and a Hayes. Washington, who is from Tennessee, will be the first of the name to sit in Congress.

A gust of wind blew a passenger off a train on the Eastern Road, near Mystic river, as he was attempting to pass from one car to another while the train was going at full speed, but he escaped serious injury, as he was tossed into a deep snow bank.

Almost everything in this world is full of deception. The biggest orange has the thickest peel, and the reddest apple is often the sourest. Things are not what they seem to be. The girl with pretty bangs may have false hair, and the most graceful skater may be the poorest sort of a cook.

Judge, to prisoner: "It's disgraceful, Rastus, that there are such men as you to prey upon the community. Did it ever occur to you that you are worse than worthless?" Prisoner, mildly: "I 'spects I would, jedge, if I 'sociated much wid sich men as you, yo' Honah, but I 'spects yo' wouldn't be dewin' er big sal'ry ebbery year."

Mother: "What did young Mr. Tompkins say to you, Clara, last night, while he was trying to button your glove?" Clara, sadly: "He said that the man who would make a glove that wouldn't button easier than that, ought to be hanged." Mother: "Well, I wouldn't waste any more time there!"

Recent Book Issues.

"Wee Wifie" is a title that suggests much of love and poetry, so in the novel of that name, by Rosa N. Carey, a good deal of those elements are naturally found. The story is based on the various trials and tribulations of youth marrying old age. If the plot and incidents are not altogether new, the theme is fortunately one that most readers are never weary of, so that those who peruse "Wee Wifie," will find much to enjoy and something to admire. Published and for sale by Lippincott. Price, 50 cents.

A good deal may depend upon first appearances, and it cannot be denied that dress is a powerful factor for favor. Consequently the neat binding, printing and other mechanical excellences of George A. Baker's "Mrs. Hephaestus," and other short stories, impress most pleasantly on even seeing; and its reading, moreover, tends to confirm this. The stories are very enjoyable bits of humor and fancy, and are entitled: "The Child of the Regiment," "The Spirit of the Age," "The Mermaid," "The Invasion of Kleindort," "Labor Troubles on an Island," and the title tale. Published by White, Stokes & Allen, New York. For sale by Lippincott.

"Harcourt; or a Soul Illumined," by Annie Somers Gilchrist, has already had the honor of a successful first edition, and now appears in a second. The story is pleasantly written without straining for effect. Its principal scenes are laid in the South, and it relates to the trials of a pair of lovers who are separated by the plottings of two villainous characters, whose wicked designs are revealed by a noble woman, of whom one of the characters says, "Here is a soul illumined." The tale is somewhat conventional in its general method, and the characters are not strongly individualized, but the descriptive passages are good, and the narrative generally interesting. Published and for sale by Lippincott.

"Unanswerable Logic," is the title of a series of spiritual discourses given through the mediumship of Thomas Gales Forster. Mr. Forster was eminent in the Spiritual faith as a teacher and worker, and this collection of his views and thoughts stand as a particular representative of the most advanced culture and development of that school. A number of subjects are embraced in the contents, including, "What is Spiritualism?" "Philosophy of Death," "What Lies Beyond the Veil?" "The Final Resurrection," "Human Destiny," "Joan of Arc," "The Spiritualism of the Apostles," "Heaven," "Spiritualists and Mediums," "Clairvoyance and Clairaudience," "Hell," "What Spiritualists Believe," etc. In these and other articles there is a great deal of new and striking thought. Published by Colby & Rich, Boston, Mass.

A story that is equally interesting and valuable, whether considered as a novel or a history, lightened and brightened through the medium of a novel idea, is represented by the great German writer, George Ebers' latest tale, "The Bride of the Nile." It is a fine production looked at from any or all points of the literary compass. The plot, which begins about the VII century, develops in Egypt, and is strangely made up of native, Arab, Moslem and Christian influences and characters. These, together with the incidents and descriptions, while true to life, are painted more lively than in most of this author's works. A strong love element is grandly treated, its central point being the old Egyptian custom, that when the river Nile refuses to rise on the traditional Night of the Dropping—June 17th—a beautiful young maiden, known as The Bride of the Nile, sacrifices herself by drowning in its waters to please the river god. Published in two volumes by Gottsberger, New York, and for sale by Porter & Coates.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

The English Illustrated Magazine for April is particularly good, in the first place for a remarkably interesting paper on "Sheridan and Miss Linley," by Matilda Stokes; and, in the next, for the beauty of its engravings. "A Journey to Exeter," a poem by Gay, affords Mr. Hugh Thomson an opportunity for five characteristic illustrations in his best vein. Farjeon's novel, "A Secret Inheritance," is continued, as are also "An Unknown Country," by the author of "John Halifax," and "Our Fishermen," by James Runciman. Published by Macmillan & Co.

The Brooklyn Magazine for April opens with "Youthful Excesses and Old Age," by Henry Ward Beecher, full of wise counsel to all. Mr. Talmage contributes "An Easter Recollection," timely and entertaining. "The Mus-qua-ka Indians," in Iowa and their curious costumes are described by Allie B. Busby. An autograph reproduction of the famous poem "Curfew Must Not Ring To-night," by Rose Hartwick Thorpe, is a pleasing feature of the number. Several charming stories are given, including "Renee," Lee C. Harley, "The Experiment," Florence L. Snow. "Was it a Crime?" Robert McPhail. "Fruits and Flowers of California," are pleasantly described by M. J. Gorton, and "A Journey Through Southern Spain," by Alfred E. Lee, etc. The periodical will appear hereafter as *The American Magazine*, and it will be handsomely illustrated. Published at Nos. 130-32 Pearl street, New York.

GRUMBLING is a great comfort to many.

Unexplained.

BY M. M. K.

MR. MALLET was very tired; he had been up most of the past night, and at eight o'clock in the morning had been summoned to a serious case fifteen miles off, and now darkness was falling on the short autumn day as he drove back along the quiet street and came in sight of the old-fashioned corner house which had been for more than thirty years his home.

As the carriage drew up before the gate two bright faces appeared at a window, and the doctor's tired countenance broke into a smile at the sight.

"Anyone been here?" he inquired as the door flew open, and his two daughters hurried him in and hung about him.

"Several persons for medicine, I believe," spoke up eighteen-year-old Milly; "but Tommy is in, and will give you all particulars."

"Mrs. Jeff Harries wants you to call and see her," chimed in Dora. "I don't quite know what is the matter. She fell down and hurt her head, or something. Anyway, poor old Nancy has been in a dreadful fume, so we sent her out about half an hour ago to see her sister."

"Well, if it is nothing serious I will take a cup of tea first, girls. I'll come in for it directly I have spoken to Tommy."

Mr. Mallet was as well known as the postman in the small country town of Dillwyn; quite one of the institutions of the place, his children sometimes told him.

He was universally respected and beloved, whilst his two daughters were general favorites; and since the death of their mother, many years previous to this date, had been carefully watched and tended by the faithful "Nancy" already referred to, who from being their nurse, had passed into the position of confidential housekeeper, and was always regarded by the girls as one of their very best friends.

Half an hour later Mr. Mallet started off to see Mrs. Jeff Harries—Nancy's sister. She and all her people were Dillwyn folk, and he had attended them for these many years.

He reached the little cottage, and in answer to his knock a pretty blue-eyed child appeared and ushered him into a darkened room.

"Well, Mrs. Harries," he began pleasantly, as he peered about and caught sight of his patient in bed with a bandaged face and head, "nothing very bad I hope?"

"Very painful, at any rate, sir; and my head is so giddy, and my eyes so weak with it."

Then the bandage being removed, there was disclosed a very disfigured and bruised face.

"Holloa, my good woman, what a black eye you have! Have you taken to fighting in your old age?"

"No, sir, indeed; but I had a nasty accident last night. I was pushed up against the sharp corner of a house and bruised like this."

After Mr. Mallet had prescribed treatment, he made some inquiries as to the cause of this disfigurement.

"How did you manage to get pushed like this?"

"It happened in Red street last evening, just at the narrow part by the foundry, sir. I was coming back from seeing poor Mrs. Jones—the one who lost her husband a month ago, sir; you remember. It was yesterday month he died, and I went round, thinking she might be a bit low. Just as I got to that part of Red street on my way back, I heard a great tramp of feet, and such a big funeral came by—a couple of hundred people, I should think, sir. I tried to make my way through, but the crowd was so great that I could not, but was jammed up against a corner. I felt quite faint and dizzy for a bit after that, and it was as much as I could do to get home with the pain in my head. I could not sleep all night with the throbbing, so I thought if you would be so kind as to come round, I should like to see you, sir."

"But whose funeral was it? I never heard of it; it's most extraordinary."

"I can't tell, sir. It was a moonlight night, as you may remember, and I wondered, too, who it could be to have such a big following, and I tried to catch sight of some of the faces, but I could not recognize any; and then the crush got so great that it was as much as I could do to try and force my way on."

"Most strange; and at such a late hour, too."

"Yes, sir; nearer nine than it was eight, for it struck the half-hour before I left Mrs. Jones."

After some more conversation the doctor left the cottage. He was very much surprised at the woman's account of the previous night's proceedings.

Not at the crowd, for Mr. Mallet had lived long enough among the Welsh to know well their custom of joining in funeral processions; but the time of night was surprising, and far more so that he, Mr. Mallet, had been ignorant of it.

Very few things happened in Dillwyn without coming to the doctor's ears, being as he was, friend alike to rich and poor. He was half-way home when he came across the superintendent of police.

"Good night, doctor," the man said, passing on, but the doctor stopped him.

"Here, I say, Lewis," he called out; "what funeral had you here yesterday?"

"Funeral, sir?" the man answered. "None yesterday; but poor old Shepherd is to be buried to-morrow."

"So I understand," returned the doctor; "but I don't mean his. Are you certain that no one was buried here yesterday?"

"Quite sure," was the decisive answer. "There has not been a burial here for several weeks. What makes you ask, sir?"

"I heard there had been one," the doctor explained, "and wondered whose it could have been. There must have been some mistake. Did any funeral procession pass through the town on its way elsewhere last night?"

"No, sir; I am certain of it."

Mr. Mallet passed on more perplexed than ever. Mrs. Harries' account had been so simple and straightforward that not a doubt of its truth had crossed his mind. He knew her to be a steady, good woman, undoubtedly honest and truthful. It certainly was a most strange case.

His daughters were waiting for him when he got home, full of questions as to Mrs. Harries' condition.

"Papa," Milly whispered in awe-stricken tones, "Nancy is in such a state, crying her eyes out."

"What a silly woman," laughed her father. "Run and tell her that her sister will be quite well in a couple of days. She has only had a shaking and a black eye."

"But, papa," Milly went on in the same tone, "Nancy says Mrs. Jeff saw a funeral, and there was no funeral, and Nancy says it must have been a warning."

"Must have been a fiddlestick," broke in her father, sharply. "Warning, indeed. Warning of what? That we are all going to die? Well, we needed no warning of that, for we knew it before. Nancy ought to be ashamed of herself for thinking and talking such rubbish."

And so saying, the doctor withdrew to his special sanctum with a perturbed and and annoyed countenance.

A month passed. Life at Dillwyn flowed on in its usual calm way. Mrs. Jeff Harries' vision, or whatever it had been, had, of course, leaked out, and had roused such universal mockery and ridicule that she had become very reticent on the point.

Her bruised face was quite right again, and the whole affair had almost faded from the minds of her neighbors. The subject had, however, often recurred to the old doctor.

He regarded it as a striking illustration of the power of imagination, and as instances of this kind did not often occur in quiet Dillwyn, it was the more interesting.

One rainy afternoon Mr. Mallet was in the surgery, reminding the small surgery boy of two or three matters which must not be forgotten, when there came a tap at the door.

"Come in," he called out, and to his surprise in walked Nancy, the confidential servant of the house. Her face was perfectly colorless, her eyes dilated.

"What on earth is the matter?" the doctor inquired in astonishment. "Nancy, what is it?"

For answer the woman held out a letter she carried in her hand. It was written on foreign paper, and as she gave it to her master she moaned—

"I know it was a warning. I knew it all along!"

And the doctor, glancing over the badly written lines in his hand, discovered that it was from a man in Australia, who had known Nancy years before, and who now wrote to ask her to break to her sister the news that her husband, Jeff Harries, while cutting down trees in company with several others (of whom the writer was one), had met with an accident—a huge tree had fallen on his leg; he had never recovered consciousness, but after lingering a few hours had died.

Dillwyn had plenty to talk about for the next few days, and subsequently inquiry proved that the funeral of poor Jeff Harries took place in that far-off land on the very evening on which his wife saw the vision of a funeral in the quiet back street of Dillwyn. Nancy and her bereaved sister believed more than ever in warnings, while the sceptical old doctor found it difficult to persuade even himself that the power of imagination alone, tremendous as it is, could bring about such a strange and startling coincidence.

A FAMILY QUARREL.—"You look very much upset, dear," he said, when she entered the room where he was waiting for her.

"Well, I should think I ought to look upset," she answered; "I've just had a most awful argument with ma!"—and she began to weep hysterically.

"Why, what is the matter, my darling?" he inquired, as he slipped an arm around her waist and endeavored to soothe her. "What was the argument?"

"Oh, how can I tell you? She said you were only trifling with me, and that you would never propose; and I told her she did you a great injustice, for I believed that you would propose to-night. She said you wouldn't, and I said you would; and I'm afraid we both lost our tempers. Dear George, you will not let ma triumph over me, will you?"

"W-h-y certainly not!" answered George.

"I knew it, my darling!" the "dear girl" exclaimed joyfully. "Come—let us go to ma and tell her how much mistaken she was."

And they did, and "ma" did not seem to be so very much broken down over the affair after all.

IN IOWA there are 955 women farmers, 90 manage market gardens, 5 own greenhouses. 13 serve as county school superintendents, 13 manage institutions of learning, 125 are physicians, 40 are pharmacists, 5 lawyers, 10 ministers, 3 dentists, 110 professional nurses, and one is a civil engineer. These figures illustrate how women are working their way into new departments of industry.

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R. R. R. not only cures the patient seized with Malaria, but if people exposed to the malarial poison will, every morning take from 20 to 30 drops of Ready Relief in water and eat, say a cracker, before going out, they will prevent attacks.

Price, 50 cts. per Bottle. Sold by druggists.

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GREAT BLOOD PURIFIER.

For the Cure of all Chronic Diseases.

Chronic Rheumatism, Scrofulous Complaints, &c., Glandular Swelling, Hacking Dry Cough, Cancerous Affections, Bleeding of the Lungs, Dyspepsia, Water Brash, White Swellings, Tumors, Pimples, Blotches, Eruptions of the Face, Ulcers, Hip Disease, Gout, Dropsy, Rickets, Salt Rheum, Bronchitis, Consumption, Diabetes, Kidney, Bladder, Liver Complaint.

The wonderful cures effected by the Sarsaparillian Resolvent of Kidney, Bladder, Ovarian and Urinary Diseases, its marvelous power in dissolving stone and calculous concretions, curing gravel, gleet and discharges from the genital glands; its powers over the kidneys in establishing a healthy secretion of urine, curing Diabetes, Inflammation or Irritation of the Bladder, Albuminous or Brick Dust Deposits, White Sand, etc., establishes its character as A GREAT CONSTITUTIONAL REMEDY.

Sold by all druggists. $1 a bottle.

RADWAY'S PILLS,

The Great Liver and Stomach Remedy,

For the cure of all disorders of the Stomach, Liver, Bowels, Kidneys, Bladder, Nervous Diseases, Loss of Appetite, Headache, Constipation, Costiveness, Indigestion, Biliousness, Fever, Inflammation of the Bowels, Piles, and all derangements of the Internal Viscera. Purely vegetable, containing no mercury, minerals or deleterious drugs.

Purgation made perfect by Dr. Radway's Pills. Uniformity and Safety of Action Secured. Perfect Digestion will be accomplished by taking one of Radway's Pills every morning, about 10 o'clock, as a dinner pill. By so doing

SICK HEADACHE,

Dyspepsia, Foul Stomach, Biliousness will be avoided and the food that is eaten contribute its nourishing properties for the support of the natural waste of the body.

☞Observe the following symptoms resulting from Disease of the Digestive Organs: Constipation, Inward Piles, Fulness of the Blood in the Head, Acidity of the Stomach, Nausea, Heartburn, Disgust of Food, Fulness or weight in the Stomach, Sour Eructations, Sinking or Fluttering of the Heart, Choking or Suffocating sensations when in a lying posture, Dimness of Vision, Dots or Webs before the Sight, Fever and Dull Pain in the head, Deficiency of Perspiration, Yellowness of the Skin and Eyes, Pain in the Side, Chest, Limbs and Sudden Flushes of Heat, Burning in the Flesh.

A few doses of RADWAY'S PILLS will free the system of all the above named disorders.

PRICE 25 CTS. PER BOX. Sold by all druggists.

Send a letter stamp to DR. RADWAY & CO., No. 32 Warren street, New York. ☞Information worth thousands will be sent to you.

TO THE PUBLIC.—Be sure and ask for RADWAY'S and see that the name "RADWAY" is on what you buy.

Humorous.

AT CHURCH, SUNDAY MORNING.

The solemn church bell pealing on the ear,
In brazen accents seems to say:
"Come, stricken heart, and find your solace here:
Come, sinner; come and pray."

And fast they come, arrayed in fashion's pride,
In silks and satins shimmering gorgeously,
To lay the burdens of the week aside,
And bow the suppliant knee.

If one could for the moment stand aloof,
Impersonal, with power to read the stream
Of thoughts upteling toward that lofty roof,
How wondrous strange 'twould seem!

Fair Nellie, hoping she won't get too stout;
Her father scheming to increase his hoard;
While over all the preacher's voice rings out,
"Hear us, good Lord!"

While Charlie prays the tailor will give time,
Maud sighs for gowns she knows she can't afford,
And Helen hopes that flirting is no sin—
"Hear us, good Lord!"

Some wish for luxuries, and some for love;
Some for revenge; some only sigh for rest;
Some fix their souls upon the realms above;
Some laugh and jest.

I often wonder does the preacher know
What lies behind the masks of seriousness
Upturned before him, placid, row on row—
I wonder does he guess!

Well, I myself have little cause for pride,
For following aimlessly this idle dream,
Instead of listening, rapt and eager-eyed,
Unto the preacher's theme.

The benediction finished, we arise;
Let's vow, while going to our several dinners,
To try and be, so far as in us lies,
A decent lot of "miserable sinners."

—E. X. SEXTON.

How to gain flesh—Buy out a butcher shop.

Articles of wide-spread popularity—Umbrellas.

It's a wise child that resembles its richest relative.

Most of the time in hot water—The washerwoman.

Jay Gould is a very short man, but he never knows what it is to be short.

If you want to see a wild cat, simply hold up the domestic article by the tail.

Why is it impossible for a bald-headed gentleman of color to join a club?—Because he is always black-ball.

A physician says: "If a child does not thrive on fresh milk, boil it." This is too severe. Why not spank it?

"What an outrage to cram so many into this railway car!" "I should say so! Why a sardine is a hermit in comparison."

Lady, in grocery store: "Let me have a pound of butter, please." Clerk, who used to tend in cigar store: "Mild or strong?"

The best way to "get rich by poultry-keeping" is to sell all your hens early every spring. Then you won't have to plant your garden but once.

A good quality of celluloid is now made from potatoes. Before long we shall hear of hardwood buttons being made out of restaurant doughnuts.

Boston club men are discussing the question as to whether or not it is etiquette to take a newspaper file away from a member when he has fallen asleep over it.

No time like the present. He: "Ah, yes, that is the dearest little hand in the world; and, Lucinda, I may some day ask you for it." She: "Ask now, George; ask now!"

Mother: "Did you steal the cake, Johnnie?" Johnnie: "No, ma'am. Did I, Mandie." Mandie, who got a piece of the cake: "No, 'deed, mamma. I saw him didn't."

Husband, impatiently, to his wife: "I told you I only wanted half a cup of tea, and, as usual, you've filled it up to the top. Don't you know what half full is?" Mother-in-law, grimly: "She ought to know by this time."

"Handling Bees" is a headline in an exchange. That's the stuff. They ought to have had handles put on them years ago, then a fellow could pick them up without getting their blamed old stinger jammed into him every time.

After a consultation, a lawyer and his client emerged from the office of the former. "Do you always lock your office when you go out?" asked the client. "Yes, of course," answered the lawyer; "I don't want any rascal to get into my office before I return."

A bad boy in a Massachusetts village surprised his teacher by promising to contribute a fine steel engraving of Washington to aid in decorating the school-room on February 22. The teacher left a large space among the evergreen trimmings on the wall, and the boy brought her a two-cent postage stamp.

A celebrated lawyer, retired from practice was one day asked his sincere opinion of the law. "Why, the fact is," rejoined he, "if any man were to claim the coat upon my back, and threaten my refusal with a law suit, he should certainly have it, lest, in defending my coat, I should lose my waistcoat also."

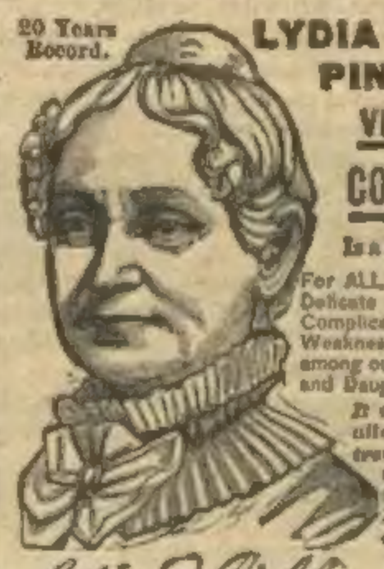
"I am afraid, Bobby," said his mother, "that, when I tell your papa what a naughty boy you've been to-day, he will punish you severely." "Have you got to tell him?" asked Bobby, anxiously. "Oh, yes; I shall tell him immediately after dinner!" The look of concern upon Bobby's face deepened, until a bright thought struck him. "Well, mamma," he said, "give him a better dinner than usual."

To Get Rid of Cockroaches.—A correspondent writes as follows: "I beg to forward you an easy, clean, and certain method of eradicating those loathsome insects from dwelling-houses. A few years ago my house was infested with cockroaches and I was recommended to try cucumber peeling as a remedy. I accordingly, a little before bedtime, strewed the floor of those parts of the house most infested with the vermin with the green peel, cut not very thin, from the cucumber, and sat up half an hour later than usual to watch the effect. Before the expiration of that time the floor where the peel lay was completely covered with cockroaches, so much so that the vegetable could not be seen, so voraciously were they engaged in sucking the poisonous moisture from it. I adopted the same plan the following night, but my visitors were not nearly so numerous—I should think not more than a fourth of the previous night. On the third night I did not discover one; but anxious to ascertain whether the house was quite clear of them, I examined the peel after I laid it down about half an hour, and perceived that it was covered with myriads of minute cockroaches, about the size of a flea. I therefore allowed the peel to remain till morning, and from that moment I have not seen a cockroach in the house. It is a very old building, and I can assure you that the above remedy requires to be perserved to for three nights to completly eradicate the pest. Of course, it should be fresh cucumber peel every night."

There are some minds like either convex or concave mirrors, who represent objects such as they receive them, but they never receive them as they are.

Honest and Reliable.

The best test, undoubtedly, of any article brought before the public for its patronage, is the continued demand for it after years of use. Especially is this true of proprietary medicines. New remedies are springing up every day, and their virtues exalted as panaceas for every ill that flesh is heir to. But the trouble is that in the great majority of cases the remedies advertised rely more upon the faith of the patient in their efficacy than upon any curative powers which they possess; hence, after a fitful existence, they are soon lost to sight and entirely forgotten by the public. The number of really reliable articles, that have stood the test of time, may be counted on the fingers. Among these, perhaps the foremost are those bearing the name of Dr. Radway & Co. The Ready Relief has the reputation of being the cheapest and best medicine for family use in the world, and the initials by which it is known, "R. R. R.," are as universally familiar as the old-fashioned alliterations, "readin', 'ritin' and 'rithmetic." This article is all that its name implies, and is guaranteed to cure the worst pains in from one to twenty minutes. It is peculiarly efficacious in cases of inflammation and congestions of the lungs, stomach and other glands or organs. For such indispositions as cramps, spasms, sour stomach, heartburn, nervousness, sleeplessness, sick headache, diarrhœa, dysentery, colic, flatulency and internal pains of all kinds it is indispensable, and should be kept constantly on hand in every well-regulated household. In the treatment of malaria, fever and ague, bilious and other quick fevers no other remedy can be compared with it. Dr. Radway's Sarsaparillian Resolvent is a blood purifier, and where the climatic changes are so frequent and so wearing upon the system, even to those of the most robust constitutions, it has had marked success as a tonic and as a remedy for all chronic diseases resulting from impure blood. Not the least important of the articles prepared by this house is Dr. Radway's Pills, the great liver and stomach remedy. They are perfectly tasteless, elegantly coated with sweet gum, and are purely vegetable, containing no mercury, minerals or deleterious drugs. Dyspepsia in its worst form is permanently eradicated from the system by the use of these pleasant little pellets, restoring strength to the stomach, and enabling it to perform all its legitimate functions. Dr. Radway & Co. also publish a very interesting work, entitled "False and True," which will be mailed to any address on receipt of a 2cent stamp. The headquarters of the firm, which has branch houses in all parts of the world, is at 32 Warren street, New York City.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For ALL of those Painful Delicate Complaints and Complicated troubles and Weaknesses so common among our Wives, Mothers, and Daughters.

It will cure entirely all leucorrhœa or vaginal troubles, Inflammation and Ulceration, Falling and Displacements; & consequent spinal Weakness, and is particularly adapted to the change of life.

Lydia E. Pinkham
The Woman's Sure Friend

LADIES,—IT WILL NOT PERFORM SURGICAL OPERATIONS OR CURE CANCER, BUT IT WILL UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, ACT IN HARMONY WITH THE LAWS OF NATURE. IF THAT FEELING OF BEARING DOWN, CAUSING PAIN, WEIGHT AND BACKACHE, IS ALWAYS PERMANENTLY CURED BY ITS USE.

Sold by Druggists. Price $1. per bottle.
Mrs. Pinkham's Liver Pills cure constipation. 25c.

GOLD WATCHES FREE

To bring our house prominently before the Ladies and to impress upon them the fact that we are Headquarters for many articles indispensable for their personal use and home adornment, we make the following liberal offer: To the person telling us the largest verse in the Bible, before June 10th, we will present a Lady's Gold Watch worth $60.00, Solid Gold, Hunting Case, Stem Winding. If there be more than one correct answer the second will receive a Lady's Solid Gold Chatelain Watch worth $40. The third a pair of Gold Bracelets worth $20. The fourth an elegant Gold Bar Pin worth $10. Each of the next 25 (if there be so many correct answers) will receive a Dozen of our Ladies' Silk Pocket Handkerchiefs worth $3. Enclose 20c. (stamps, silver or postal note) with your answer, for which we will send you our New Elegantly Illustrated Catalogue, containing the latest Fancy Stitches and Designs for Crazy Patchwork, &c., and a finely Illustrated Book of Instructions in the fascinating and profitable employment of making Artificial Flowers, &c., from Tissue Paper. Address
YALE SILK WORKS, 870 CHAPEL ST, NEW HAVEN, CONN.

1 Game Authors, 1 Game Dominoes, 14 New Songs, 16 Complete Stories, Agt's Sample Book and this Ring, 10c. 6 for 50c. VANNA CO., NEW HAVEN, CT.

40 Photos of Female Beauties, 10c. 120 for 25c. Sure to suit. Cat. 3c. Gem Agency, Orleans, Ind.

WANTED.—Men, Women, Boys and Girls to earn $70 per month at their own homes. A nice, light, easy and profitable business. Costly outfit of samples, a package of goods and full instructions sent for 10c. Address, H. C. HOWELL & CO., RUTLAND, VT.

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Inventor of the celebrated COMBABLE VENTILATING WIG and ELASTIC BAND TOUPEE.

Instructions to enable Ladies and Gentlemen to measure their own heads with accuracy:

FOR WIGS, INCHES.
No. 1. The round of the head.
No. 2. From forehead over the head to neck.
No. 3. From ear to ear over the top.
No. 4. From ear to ear round the forehead.

TOUPEES AND SCALPS, INCHES.
No. 1. From forehead back as far as bald.
No. 2. Over forehead as far as required.
No. 3. Over the crown of the head.

He has always ready for sale a splendid Stock of Gents' Wigs, Toupees, Ladies' Wigs, Half Wigs, Frisettes, Braids, Curls, etc., beautifully manufactured, and as cheap as any establishment in the Union. Letters from any part of the world will receive attention.

Private rooms for Dyeing Ladies' and Gentlemen's Hair.

CURE FOR THE DEAF

Peck's Patent Improved Cushioned Ear Drums Perfectly Restore the Hearing, and perform the work of the natural drum. Invisible, comfortable and always in position. All conversation and even whispers heard distinctly. Send for illustrated book with testimonials, FREE. Address or call on F. HISCOX, 853 Broadway, New York. Mention this paper.

NEW Sample Book of beautiful cards, 14 Games, 12 tricks in magic, 436 Album verses. All for a 2c. stamp. STAR CARD CO., Station 15, Ohio.

$250 A MONTH. Agents wanted. 90 best selling articles in the world. 1 sample free. Address JAY BRONSON, Detroit, Mich.

CARDS SUNDAY SCHOOL, REWARD AND VISITING. Lovely Samples, Brass-new Catalogue, & Agts. terms for 2c. stamps. W. C. Griswold & Co., Centerbrook, Ct.

A CARD.—To all who are suffering from errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, &c., I will send a receipt that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send self-addressed envelope to REV. JOSEPH T. INMAN, Station D, New York City.

PILES. Instant relief. Final cure and never returns. No indelicacy. Neither knife, purge, salve or suppository. Liver, kidney and all bowel troubles—especially constipation—cured like magic. Sufferers will learn of a simple remedy free, by addressing, J. H. REEVES, 78 Nassau St., N. Y.

Make money odd days selling "Wonders" and other new books. Write A. GORTON & Co., Phila., Pa.

18 New Hidden Name Border Cards and Ring, 10c., 30 pks. & 6 ring-asks. Munson Bros., Mt. Carmel, Ct.

WOMAN WANTED SALARY $35 to $50 for our business in her vicinity. Responsible house. References exchanged. GAY M'F'G CO., 14 Barclay St., N.Y.

SECRET OF BEAUTY

BLOOM OF YOUTH

Every Lady desires to be considered handsome. The most important adjunct to perfect beauty is a clear, smooth, soft and beautiful skin. Ladies afflicted with Tan, Freckles, Rough or Discolored Skin and other Blemishes, should lose no time in applying this old established and delightful Toilet preparation.

It will *immediately* obliterate all such imperfections and is perfectly harmless.

It has been chemically analysed by the Board of Health of New York City, and pronounced entirely free from any material injurious to the health or skin.

Price, 75 Cents Per Bottle.

Sold by Druggists and Fancy Goods Dealers Everywhere.

LAIRD'S

Depot 39 Barclay St., N. Y.

WHITE LILAC SOAP

The new and exquisite Toilet Soap which for perfect Purity and Permanency of Delicate fragrance is unequalled for either Toilet or Nursery use. No materials unless carefully selected and absolutely pure ever enter into its manufacture, hence this Soap is perfectly reliable for use in the Nursery and unrivalled for general Toilet use.

Laird's White Lilac Toilet Soap is *refreshing* and *soothing* to the skin, leaving it beautifully *clear soft* and *smooth*.

Price, 50c. per Cake. Box 3 Cakes 50c.

Sent by Mail upon Receipt of Price.

Sold by Druggists and Fancy Goods Dealers Everywhere.

TO PLAY MUSIC WITHOUT STUDY!

This Can Be Done by Means of the

INSTANTANEOUS GUIDE to the PIANO or ORGAN.

Anyone knowing a tune, either "in the head," as it is called, or able to hum, whistle or sing, can play it WITHOUT ANY PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC OR THE INSTRUMENTS. In fact it may be the first time they have ever seen a piano or organ, yet if they know so much as to whistle or hum a tune—say "Way Down on the Swanee River," for instance—they can play it IMMEDIATELY, correctly and with good effect, on the piano or organ, with the assistance of this GUIDE. THE GUIDE shows how the tunes are to be played with both hands and in different keys. Thus the player has the full effect of the bass and treble clefs, together with the power of making correct and harmonious chords in accompaniments. It must be plainly understood that the Guide will not make an accomplished musician without study. It will do nothing of the kind. What it can do, do well and WITHOUT FAIL is to enable anyone understanding the nature of a tune or air in music to play such tunes or airs, without ever having opened a music book, and without previously needing to know the difference between A or G, a half-note or a quarter-note, a sharp or a flat. The Guide is placed on the instrument, and the player, without reference to anything but what he is shown by it to do, can in a few moments play the piece accurately and without the least trouble. Although it does not and never can supplant regular books of study, it will be of incalculable assistance to the player by "ear" and all others who are their own instructors. By giving the student the power to play IMMEDIATELY twelve tunes of different character—this number of pieces being sent with each Guide—the ear grows accustomed to the sounds, and the fingers used to the position and touch of the keys. So, after a very little practice with the Guide, it will be easy to pick out, almost with the skill and rapidity of the trained player, any air or tune that may be heard or known.

The Guide, we repeat, will not learn how to read the common sheet music. But it will teach those who cannot spend years learning an instrument, how to learn a number of tunes without EITHER PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OR STUDY. A child if it can say its A, B, C's and knows a tune—say "The Sweet Bye and Bye"—can play it, after a few attempts, quite well. There are many who would like to be able to do this, for their own and the amusement of others, and to such we commend The Guide as BOUND TO DO for them ALL WE SAY. Its cheapness and usefulness, moreover, would make it a very good present to give a person, whether young or old, at Christmas. Almost every home in the land has a piano, organ or melodeon, whereon seldom more than one of the family can play. With this Guide in the house everybody can make more or less good use of their instruments.

The Guide will be sent to any address, all postage paid, on receipt of FIFTY CENTS. (Postage stamps, 2's, taken.) For Ten Cents extra a music book, containing the words and music for 100 popular songs, will be sent with The Guide. Address

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726 SANSOM ST., PHILADELPHIA.

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Chart on Rollers, and Book Sent Free.
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Restores original luster and finish to the shoe. Only Dressing that will produce a Polish without shrinking, cracking, or hardening the leather. Each Bottle contains double the quantity of other dressings. Gold Medal received at New Orleans for superiority over all others. Your Shoe Dealer has it. Manuf'd by GEO. H. WOOD & CO., BOSTON.

IMPROVED HIRES ROOT BEER
25 CENTS PACKAGE
Makes Five Gallons of a delicious, sparkling temperance beverage. Strengthens and purifies the blood. Its purity and delicacy commend it to all. Sold by druggists and storekeepers everywhere.

AGENTS WANTED (Samples FREE) for Dr. Scott's beautiful Electric Corsets, Brushes, Belts, Etc. No risk, quick sales. Territory given, satisfaction guaranteed. Dr. SCOTT, 842 B'way, N. Y.

Latest Fashion Phases.

It is quite an appalling undertaking to take an inventory of the new goods. The woolen stuffs get the first inspection, as they have just now "the interest of actuality."

When they have been roughly divided into stripes, checks, plaids, and plain camel's hairs, diagonals and other suitings, and a consideration of the varieties under each heading comes next in order, a clear notion of things is lost in the multitude of individual combinations.

But as the optimists never fail cheerfully to exclaim every year, "there is something to suit every taste."

Among the stripes there are some exquisitely fine and soft camel's hairs in beige and gray shades, the stripes three inches wide, in a darker tone of the same color, and barred diagonally across with fine dark pin lines and rows of white spots.

This is in the piece of one of the most decidedly novel-looking designs of the season. Not a very great deal of the stripe is employed in the making up of the gown.

It shows habitually in one or two panels among the long, plain camel's hair folds and Bedouin draperies of the skirt—the stripes running crosswise—then, in a narrow vest and small revers at the top of the same on the camel's hair waist.

The sleeves are also occasionally combined to show bands of the stripe-like bracelets girding the upper part of the arm.

Camel's hairs in combination will form some of the most quietly lady-like walking suits of the ensuing season. It may be remarked for those who wish to know that they are sold at about $1.75 or $2 per yard, in double widths.

These are counted as among the French suitings, as are the very pretty crepy wool goods which come in beige, with an assorted plaid in dark brown; in mordore brown, with an assorted plaid of blue and mordore; in a charming greenish gray, with a plaid in black and pale green and gray; in steel gray, with a plaid of wine color.

Those women who are opposed to the all-invading British ideas in gowns as masculine, and even in their very rigidity and simplicity "loud," will make their spring purchases upon these lines.

Others, who do not much care about looking feminine and Frenchy, and whose ideals are all tailor made, will expend what enthusiasm they have to lavish on the matter on the decidedly "suity" light summer checks some of the smallest designs of which they will perceive at once to be "delightfully" like those of men's trousers ($1 to $1.25 per yard).

On the closely woven, pin-shaped suitings, with intersecting lines of blue, red and cream on a slate grounding, or of seal, green and white over a fawny brown; and also, no doubt, upon the somewhat obstreperous designs in larger plaids which will be used as skirtings, with quite plain draperies.

To pass to cotton goods, one finds the stripes predominant there also. The ginghams, with little flowered Pompadour lines, alternating with lacy white insertings and broad stripes of old pink, buff, blue, and cream, affect certain little airs of elegance, certain pretensions, which make one hesitate to speak of them in the familiar fashion one used with reference to the ginghams of one's childhood.

Then they appear in large delicately tinted bars, and transparent white lines, forming a wide plaid; these, like the stripes, have the plain gingham, in a summery light tint, to go with them. Altogether, they are very pretty, and one treats them in their new guise with the new deference one feels constrained to adopt towards some radiant juvenile creature, just "out," and panoplied in the fresh little reserves and daintiness of young womanhood, whom one last saw growing rapidly out of her skirt at the knees, and with her hair in a pigtail.

In proportion as the ginghams evolute into spheres hitherto closed to them, the sateens grow more sober and subdued. They are extremely demure in dark brown, dark green, dark blue, dark garnet, with little white spots, dots, rings and cubes, and things that look like Chinese characters sprinkled over them.

This, which we had last year, is the only style, excepting a few small checks, which, in sateens, are thoroughly a novelty, and some very pretty stripes, formed of clusters of many pin lines of two sombre colors,—say dark red, and dark blue. These will "go" for skirts and for a combination with plain sateens of the darker color.

For the street on hot days we suspect that these dark plain and striped sateens, with a touch of velvet in cuffs and collar and vest, will have no end of patrons.

The silk stuffs now and through the coming summer will be faille Francaise and moire—commonly spelt with an acute accent on the final e, and pronounced "moirey," for no reason, apparently, except that in the original French there is no trace of an accent, and that the thing is moire and nothing else.

Whole dresses of French faille, with revers, bands, etc., of velvet, to serve as a relief, are in prospect.

That always charming fabric, moire and satin, in alternate stripes, is introduced once more and recommended among the simpler uses to which it can be put, for combination with fine cashmere, either for the street or house.

There is not a little gold bullion and lace to be seen in the handsome imported suits, and some traces of silver appear as well on toilets of heliotrope or gray faille, sicilienne, or satin; satin, by the way, though given the go-by on this side of the water, has not received as summary a dismissal in Paris, where the good dressmakers do not hesitate to use it by way of change.

In the matter of head-dress, you can scarcely do wrong in selecting a beaded bonnet. The choice is large. They are to be had in every conceivable color, and in many varieties, and there are so many novel features in the new productions, that last year's goods are out of fashion.

The most costly kind of beaded bonnet is worked with an admixture of tambour in silk on transparent net foundations, but while they look light, they are so well covered with the work that the hair is not seen through.

Small seed pearls are used, with jet and glass beads, but more frequently metallic beads, which are bright and glistening, and accord perfectly in color.

Some of the prettiest are combinations of cardinal and coral, primrose and steel, and two shades of heliotrope. The brims are mostly covered with velvet and edged with beads, sometimes sewn over like a rope, and plenty of feathers and bows seem admissible on the front.

Other bonnets are beaded on wire, and they show infinite variety in the shape of brim and crown. They have the appearance of a fine bead network, with tassels of beads hanging from each intersection; the brims are wired, and have often vandyked edges; and a variety which impresses itself on the eye and mind is bent into longitudinal ridges from crown to brim.

Corrugated pearls in many colorings are a novelty which will be worn at races and gay gatherings in the summer, and these larger beads are placed at the angles formed by network of a much smaller make.

Straws are to be greatly worn in fine Dunstables and a long range of fancy materials. The plaits in the plain kinds are finer than in previous years, and they are to be had in almost any color.

Now as to shape: The new bonnets are longer and higher from the brim to the crown, and these crowns are both quaint and curious, many of them of the nature of the horseshoe, but quite different. They rejoice in the specific name of "church door," or "flat-iron," by which it is seen that they describe a pointed arch.

Some of them are cloven down the centre, as though struck with a hatchet, while some are so scooped at the top that, looking towards the front, the crown stands up in two points above the brim in height; others again are divided into four quarters by a straw ridge, the plaits each going diverse ways.

The sugar-bag crown has a square straight ridge at the top; straws are often covered with bead tassels, and many of the brims are bordered with beads, but, as a rule, they are cloven in the centre; and the Olivia is the dominant idea; the point turning upwards in contradistinction to the Marie Stuart where the point turns down.

Odds and Ends.

SOMETHING FOR THE TABLE.

Potato Sautees.—Take some cold boiled potatoes, cut them in slices, and put them into a saucepan, with plenty of butter or clarified beef dripping, salt, plenty of pepper, and some finely minced parsley; keep turning them over till they are a light brown.

—— Cut potatoes with a vegetable cutter into small balls about the size of a marble, put them into a stewpan with plenty of butter and a good sprinkling of salt; keep the pan covered, and shake it occasionally until they are quite done and of a golden color, which will be in about one hour's time.

Fried Potatoes.—Pare some potatoes so as to give each the form of a cylinder, then cut each cylinder in slices the eighth of an inch thick; dry them thoroughly with a cloth, and put them in a frying basket. Have ready two pans filled with boiling lard, plunge the basket in one of them, and keep shaking it; in two or three minutes lift up the basket and plunge it into the other pan, when the slices of potatoes will swell out; drain them of all fat and serve. The secret of success consists in removing the basket from the first pan of fat at the right moment; the potatoes should not be allowed to color in it.

Clear Game Soup.—Take the remnants of any kind of game not high, put them into a saucepan with an onion or carrot, two or three cloves, a small piece of mace, a bay leaf, some parsley, whole pepper, and salt to taste. Cover the whole with veal or poultry stock, and set the saucepan to boil gently for a couple of hours. Strain off the soup and set it to boil again, then throw in an ounce of raw beef or liver coarsely chopped, let it give one boil, and strain the soup though a napkin. If not quite clear, the clarifying process must be repeated. A very small quantity of sherry may be put in before clarifying.

Oyster Soup.—Take four dozen oysters, parboil them in their own liquor. Beard two dozen and lay them aside. Pound the rest and the beards with the yolks of three hard-boiled eggs, add the oyster liquor and as much white stock as you want soup; let the whole boil, and then pass it through a hair sieve. Put in the whole oysters, make the soup hot, season with pepper, salt, and grated nutmeg, and, just before serving, stir in off the fire a gill of cream beaten up with the yolk of a raw egg.

—— Take 2 oz. of butter and a tablespoonful of flour, mix over the fire, and add one quart of fish stock; when it boils, add two dozen of oysters blanched in their own liquor, bearded, and each cut in two or three pieces, add also the liquor, strained, some grated nutmeg, a small quantity of minced parsley, pepper and salt to taste. Stir in, at the last, off the fire, the yolks of two eggs, beaten up with the juice of half a lemon, and strained.

Gravy Soup.—Take from 3 lb. to 4 lb. of shin of beef, cut off ½ lb. of lean, and put what is left into a stewpan, add four quarts of water and a large pinch of salt; when boiling skim it well, and put in one large carrot, one turnip, two large onions, four or five cloves, a few peppercorns, any trimmings of leeks or celery; leave it to boil gently four or five hours, skim off the fat, strain it through a cloth into a basin, leave it to cool; cut the lean meat very small, pound it, and work into it one whole egg, a little salt, and any trimmings of cooked veal or fowl, a few trimmings of uncooked carrot, onion and celery; pour in the stock, stir it over a quick fire until it boils, leave it to boil from ten to fifteen minutes, strain through a napkin into a clean stewpan, let it come to the boil, and serve.

Coffee Ice Pudding.—Pound 2 oz. of freshly-roasted coffee in a mortar, just enough to crush the berries without reducing them to powder. Put them into a pint of milk with 6 oz. of loaf sugar, let it boil, then leave it to get cold, strain it on the yolks of six eggs in a double saucepan, and stir on the fire till the custard thickens. When quite cold work into it a gill and a half of cream whipped to a froth. Freeze the mixture in the ice pot, then fill a plain ice mould with it, and lay it in ice till the time of serving.

Chocolate Cream.—Mix the yolks of six eggs, strained with 2 oz. of pounded loaf sugar, 2 oz. of grated chocolate, and one pint of milk. Set the mixture on the fire in a double saucepan, the outer one filled with hot water, and keep stirring until the milk thickens; dissolve in a little milk 1 oz. of gelatine, previously soaked in cold water; add this to the cream, strain it, pour it into a mould, and put into a cold place, or on ice to set.

Anchovy Sauce.—Chop very finely three or four small onions, six anchovies (washed and boned), a little lemon peel, a sprig of parsley, and few capers; brown a tablespoonful of flour in butter, mix with it the anchovies, onions, etc., and a little stock and boil for a few minutes.

SEVEN years ago Henry Whittaker, of Syracuse, N. Y., was divorced from his wife, the mother of five children. He then married a widow, who had seven children by him. She died, and Whittaker entered into correspondence with his first wife, who was in England, effected a reconciliation, brought her over here, and married her again.

Confidential Correspondents.

G. P.—The term of the Mayor of Philadelphia under the new charter is four years, at an annual salary of $12,000.

NANKI-POOH.—What a ridiculous question! In one sense to-morrow never comes; in another sense it does. We are sorry you and your sister had nothing better to quarrel about.

LIZZIE.—By writing to the Dean of Jefferson College, this city, and giving good reasons for answering your letter, you might learn more about what is known as hypnotism and its relation to modern medical science.

A. F.—The red hand on the baronet's escutcheon represents the "bloody hand of Ulster" in Ireland. Baronetcies were founded by James I. to raise money in connection with his scheme for the colonisation of that province, and its device was therefore naturally adopted as the heraldic symbol of the new order.

A. R. D.—It is possible that you misunderstood the persons you overheard talking on the subject. The fructification of some plants and flowering shrubs is helped by bees and insects carrying the pollen from one flower to another, but neither clover nor buckwheat requires the interposition of bees to ensure its fertility.

ANXIOUS.—No fortune-teller, "prophet," seer, clairvoyant, "medium," or anyone of the sort, has any power of foretelling the future, and many of those who advertise under such names are people "farthest from whom is best." Consult the advice of relatives and trustworthy friends, use your own judgment, and save your money.

KANGAROO.—Blushing is what is physiologically known as an "involuntary" action of the nervous system on the blood-vessels of the face, causing them to dilate under the influence of mental emotion, and the skin to become suffused. The obvious remedy is to maintain the mental equilibrium, and to check the emotion that causes the blushing.

EVA.—There would be no harm at all in your putting a little color on your cheeks. The best coloring-matter to use is that supplied by the natural human circulation. It can be perfectly obtained by exercise in the open air, producing a good and healthy appetite. Never employ any other. "A little touching up" can only make you ridiculous or worse. Men are certain to find it out, and will despise you accordingly.

G. W. K.—You must send a copy of the title page of your music to the "Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C." You must send a fee of fifty cents with this, and fifty more when you get your seal of copy-right from the Librarian. Then after the music is published, you must send two complete copies to the Librarian. There is no fee to be paid other than the one dollar mentioned above. You have to put a notice on each piece of music you print that it is "Copy-righted According to Act of Congress."

ENA.—All things considered, we do not think you have done anything which you had not a right to do. You were entitled to know the actual reason why he wished to have the marriage postponed. His conduct indicates that he prefers the other young lady to you, and your determination not to send for him to call on you is a proper one. You should not violate your own sense of self-respect. Besides, your mother approves of your course, and it is always safe for a daughter to act in such matters in accordance with her mother's judgment.

SANS.—If the so-called damp spots on the back of silvered plated-glass are visible in front, there is no remedy save cleaning off the old deposit and re-silvering. They are probably not due to moisture as such, but to some chemical action which the dampness has enabled to start. Your neighborhood is probably impregnated with more or less acid fumes, or you burn much gas. When you have had the glass re-silvered, see that the coating is well protected with a thoroughly sound and efficient varnish. Thick shellac varnish is the best.

R. S. K.—Mead and metheglin are similar, but not precisely the same, nor is either beverage always made in the same way. Honey is a principal ingredient in each. They are not much used now. A person may get drunk on either of them, if he drinks it to excess; but, used with any degree of moderation, neither of them is intoxicating. It is said that Queen Elizabeth was very fond of metheglin, and used to give special orders as to how it was to be made in its preparation, the manufacturers were sure to be soundly rated for their carelessness, and the Queen would drink an unusual quantity to allay her excitement. Metheglin was a favorite beverage of literary people and the clergy in former days.

STUDENT.—There is no positively accurate information attainable in regard to the desert of Sahara; but it is believed by scientific men who have investigated the matter, that some of the large desert tracts on the globe were once fertile regions. It is also believed that their fertility was destroyed by burning the forests with which they were once covered. The territory of Tunis is sometimes referred to as affording very strong proof of this theory. It is now largely a desert, and can barely support a population of one million and a half, whereas it is said that within historical periods Tunis was an exceedingly fertile country and had a population of twenty million. But the forests were burned off, the streams dried up, the land became barren, and the population perished by tens of thousands till it was reduced to its present paucity of numbers.

READER.—An instrument capable of transmitting musical sounds, and also, imperfectly, speech, was invented by Reiss in 1852, but the articulating telephone now in use dates from 1876, when it was invented by Graham Bell. It consists of a wooden or ebonite case, terminating at one end in a conical aperture or mouthpiece, behind which is a plate or diaphragm of thin sheet-iron. Close behind the diaphragm is the end of a cylindrical bar magnet, round which is wrapped a coil of fine insulated wire, the ends of which are attached to insulated wires that are conducted to the distant station, and there connected with a similar instrument. A person speaks into the mouthpiece of the telephone, and the vibrations of his voice are communicated to the diaphragm, causing it to vibrate backwards and forwards—i.e., to approach and recede from the magnet. As it approaches or recedes from the magnet, it causes, respectively, a slight decrease or increase in the strength of the latter, and these alterations in the strength of the magnet produce currents that flow to the distant telephone, and create a corresponding change in the strength of the magnet attached to it. Thus the diaphragm of the second telephone is made to vibrate, and the vibrations being communicated to the air, the words spoken to the first telephone are reproduced by the second.